EAST PARK ENERGY

East Park Energy

EN010141

Policy Compliance Document

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EAST PARK ENERGY

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

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Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
AAC	Area of Archaeological Constraint
AC	Alternating Current
AIL	Abnormal Indivisible Load
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now 'National Landscape')
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BBHER	Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record
BBHET	Bedford Borough Historic Environment Team
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council
CHER	Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record
CHET	Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015
CWS	County Wildlife Site
DC	Direct Current
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCO	Development Consent Order
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
DfT	Department for Transport
DNO	Distribution Network Operator
EA	Environment Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMF / EMFs	Electric and Magnetic Fields
EN-1	Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy
EN-3	National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure
EN-5	National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure
EPA 1990	Environmental Protection Act 1990
ES	Environmental Statement
F-gas	Fluorinated greenhouse gases (EU/UK F-gas Regulation)
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
HDC	Huntingdonshire District Council
HE	Historic England
HER / HERs	Historic Environment Record(s)
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation

HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MSA	Mineral Safeguarding Area
NMU	Non-Motorised User(s)
NOx	Nitrogen oxides
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPS	National Policy Statement
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
oBSMP	Outline Battery Safety Management Plan
oCEMP	outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
oCTMP	outline Construction Traffic Management Plan
oDEMP	Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan
Ofgem	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
ONR	Office for Nuclear Regulation
oOEMP	Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan
oSSCEP	outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan
PCD	Policy Compliance Document
PM10	Particulate matter up to 10 microns in diameter
PM2.5	Particulate matter up to 2.5 microns in diameter
PRoW / PROW	Public Right(s) of Way
PV	Photovoltaic
Ramsar	Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention)
RIGS	Regionally Important Geological Site
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SF6	Sulphur hexafluoride
SOCG	Statement of Common Ground
SoR	Statement of Reasons
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPZ	Source Protection Zone
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems

oSWMP	outline Surface Water Management Plan
TSO	Transmission System Operator
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Policy Compliance Document

1.1.1 This document comprises a Policy Compliance Document (PCD) which has been prepared to accompany the application for development consent for the East Park Energy project ('the Scheme'). The purpose of this PCD is to provide an appraisal of each relevant individual national or local planning policy and draw conclusions on whether the Scheme is compliant with that policy.

1.1.2 There is no statutory requirement to prepare a Policy Compliance Document as part of an application for development consent. The concept of a Policy Compliance Document was introduced by the Planning Inspectorate as part of the '2024 Pre-Application Prospectus', with the Planning Inspectorate stating that:

> *"The development by the applicant of a Policy Compliance Document (PCD) will establish a resource which may assist a variety of stakeholders, but it will have particular value for appointed Examining Authorities. We have heard from Examining Authorities that the presentation of policy evidence in the PCD format helps them to monitor the performance of the application against policy requirements and objectives in a systematic way, improving the post-submission experience for all. Applicants can expect that the development of a PCD may result in fewer written and oral questions to them and other Interested Parties concerning the policy case, allowing resources to be focused on other important areas of the examination."*

1.1.3 The 2024 Pre-Application Prospectus states that the PCD should include evidence of how the policy requirements established within any relevant National Policy Statement(s) (and / or emerging drafts) and other important national and local policy documents are satisfied by the application. It should be approached section by section / requirement by requirement and outline

the applicant's response with links to relevant evidence contained within the application.

1.1.4 This PCD has been prepared to satisfy the Planning Inspectorate's requirements as set out in the 2024 Pre-Application Prospectus.

1.2 Scope of this Policy Compliance Document

Overview

1.2.1 This Policy Compliance Document (PCD) has been prepared as a separate stand-alone document in accordance with the requirements of the 2024 Pre-Application Prospectus. However, it should be read in conjunction with the submitted **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.

1.2.2 The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** sets out the overall case for the Scheme, providing a description of the development, the need for the development, a summary of the main impacts, the policy context and how the project broadly relates to the requirements of national and local policy. This PCD provides a comprehensive schedule and appraisal of all relevant national and local planning policy.

1.2.3 As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, under Section 104 of the Planning Act 2008 the Secretary of State must decide the application for development consent for the Scheme in accordance with the relevant national policy statement, but must also have regard to any local impact report submitted by a local authority, any matters prescribed in relation to the proposed development, and any other matters which the Secretary of State considers to be important and relevant, which could include other national and local planning policy, such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local development plans.

National Planning Policy

National Policy Statements

1.2.4 For the Scheme, the relevant National Policy Statements against which the Secretary of State must make their decision were all designated in January 2024 and are listed below:

- Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1);
- NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3); and
- NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5).

1.2.5 The relevant policies from each of the abovementioned NPSs are set out in Tables 1 to 3 of this PCD. Where only part of a policy or paragraph may be of relevance to the Scheme an abridged version may have been provided. Policies or paragraphs of the NPSs that are not relevant to the Scheme have generally not been included within this PCD.

~~Draft~~ Updated National Policy Statements

1.2.6 Government designated updated National Policy Statements for Energy in November 2025, and these came into force on 6th January 2026:

i) Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1), December 2025[1];
ii) NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), December 2025[2]; and
iii) NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5), December 2025[3].

1.2.7 Section 1.6 of the 2026 NPS EN-1 confirms that for schemes accepted for examination before the final publication of the approved 2025 amendments, the 2024 suite of NPSs should have effect. East Park Energy was accepted

[1] *DESNZ (2025). Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1). [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6915ba42bc34c86ce4e6e726/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-web-accessible.pdf*

[2] *DESNZ (2025). National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3). [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6915b78bbc34c86ce4e6e71f/national-policy-statement-for-renewable-energy-infrastructure-en-3-web-accessible.pdf*

[3] *DESNZ (2025). National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5). [online] Available at:*

for examination in October 2025 prior to the final publication of the 2025 amendments. The 2024 NPSs therefore have effect for decision making.

1.2.8 The Applicant has prepared a separate **Note on updated National Policy Statements EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 [EN010141/DR/8.5]**.

1.2.9 The changes introduced by the updated 2025 NPSs reinforce the Government's focus on the need for new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure to achieve the Clean Power 2030 Mission. Consequently, these updates and amendments to the NPSs would have little material impact on the Secretary of State's decision-making given the nature of the Scheme as a renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure project.

~~1.2.6 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero carried out consultation on draft updates to EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 on the 24 April 2025. One of the most substantial proposed changes relates to the integration of the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan into the NPSs. In this regard, the draft update highlights the essential role that renewable energy NSIPs have in achieving the target of producing at least 95% of Great Britain's generation from clean sources of power by 2030 and is therefore consistent with the need case presented in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**. In relation to solar energy the draft updates do not contain any material changes which affect or amend the approach to the environmental assessments presented in the **Environmental Statement (ES) [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. As such, the April 2025 draft National Policy Statements have not been considered further in this PCD.~~

National Planning Policy Framework

~~1.2.7~~1.2.10 The most recent version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF confirms that it does not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects, which should be determined in accordance with the decision-making framework set out in the Planning Act 2008. However, Paragraph 5 does confirm that the NPPF can be a relevant consideration in decision-making.

~~1.2.8~~1.2.11 This PCD does not review the compliance of the Scheme with individual policies contained within the NPPF, but where material to the assessment or decision-making process they are covered in Section 7.0 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.

Local Planning Policy

~~1.2.9~~1.2.12 The Order Limits lie across the boundary of the administrative areas of Bedford Borough Council (BBC), which is a unitary authority, and Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), which is a two-tier authority with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). The adopted local development plan documents relevant to the Scheme comprise the following:

- Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030;
- Bedford Allocations and Designations Local Plan;
- Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Strategic Sites and Policies;
- Saved Policies of the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2002;
- Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036;
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan; and
- Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan 2021 to 2036.

~~1.2.10~~1.2.13 The relevant policies from each of the above local development plan documents are set out in Tables 4 to 10 of this PCD. Where only part of a policy or paragraph may be of relevance to the Scheme an abridged version may have been provided. Policies or paragraphs that are not relevant to the Scheme have generally not been included within this PCD.

2.0 OVERARCHING NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR ENERGY (EN-1)

2.1.1 Table 1 sets out policy requirements from the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1).

Table 1: Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Section 3: The Need for new Nationally Significant Energy Infrastructure Projects			
Secretary of State Decision Making	3.2.6	The Secretary of State should assess all applications for development consent for the types of infrastructure covered by this NPS on the basis that the government has demonstrated that there is a need for those types of infrastructure which is urgent, as described for each of them in this Part.	The need for the Scheme is established in NPS EN-1 which identifies that nationally significant low carbon infrastructure is of 'Critical National Priority' (CNP). Section 2.0 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** provides a summary of this need in the context of the wider statutory requirements and policy commitments made by the Government. The need for the Scheme is therefore clearly and well established, and as set out in paragraph 3.2.8 of EN-1, there is no need to specifically consider the need case for East Park Energy in isolation.
	3.2.7	In addition, the Secretary of State has determined that substantial weight should be given to this need when considering applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008.	
	3.2.8	The Secretary of State is not required to consider separately the specific contribution of any individual project to satisfying the need established in this NPS.	
The Role of Wind and Solar	3.3.20	Wind and solar are the lowest cost ways of generating electricity, helping reduce costs and providing a clean and secure source of electricity supply (as they are not reliant on fuel for generation). Our analysis shows that a secure, reliable, affordable, net zero consistent system in 2050 is likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar.	The Scheme is a new solar electricity generating station that is consistent with the objectives of Government strategy (as set out in Section 2.0 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**) to deliver a cleaner and more secure electricity network.
The Role of Electricity Storage	3.3.25	Storage has a key role to play in achieving net zero and providing flexibility to the energy system, so that high volumes of low carbon power, heat and transport can be integrated.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 100 MW that would play a crucial role in enabling the Scheme to maximise its generation potential by storing excess electricity not required by the grid at times of low demand, and releasing it at times of peak demand. In addition to its function as an essential part of the Scheme, the BESS ~~would~~ could also be available for grid-balancing services should the Scheme secure an import connection offer during the operational phase of the Scheme. By importing excess electricity from the grid and storing it, the BESS would be able to ~~be capable of~~ ~~capturing~~ capture electricity that would otherwise be lost / unutilised during periods when production of renewable energy exceeds demand, which is currently managed through curtailment[4]. During situations when generating stations are interrupted, the BESS can also be used to bridge the gap in production, thus avoiding potential blackouts.
	3.3.26	Storage is needed to reduce the costs of the electricity system and increase reliability by storing surplus electricity in times of low demand to provide electricity when demand is higher. There is currently around 4GW of electricity storage operational in GB, around 3GW of which is pumped hydro storage and around 1GW is battery storage.	
	3.3.27	Storage can provide various services, locally and at the national level. These include maximising the usable output from intermittent low carbon generation (e.g. solar and wind), reducing the total amount of generation capacity needed on the system; providing a range of balancing services to the NETSO and Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to	

[4] *Curtailment is when a generator's output is reduced, or consumption is limited, to maintain grid stability and prevent overloads or other issues.*

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
		help operate the system; and reducing constraints on the networks, helping to defer or avoid the need for costly network upgrades as demand increases.	
	3.3.29	The Infrastructure Planning (Electricity Storage Facilities) Order 2020 removed all forms of electricity storage, other than pumped hydroelectric storage, from the definition of nationally significant energy generating stations under the Planning Act 2008.	The BESS component of the Scheme is associated infrastructure to the nationally significant infrastructure comprising of a new solar electricity generating station that will provide significant benefits as part of the project set out above.
Section 4: Assessment Principles			
General Policies and Considerations			
Presumption in favour of development	4.1.1	This part of EN-1, Assessment Principles, sets out the general policies for the submission and assessment of applications relating to energy infrastructure.	The Scheme is a type of energy generation recognised in Part 3 of NPS EN-1 and therefore benefits from the starting presumption in favour of granting consent. This PCD provides a detailed appraisal of the policies contained within NPS EN-1 and demonstrates compliance with all applicable policies. In conjunction with the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the PCD demonstrates that the benefits of the Scheme clearly outweigh any adverse impacts, and that there are no relevant policies in the NPSs that clearly indicate consent should be refused. The Scheme is compliant with each of the provisions set out in para. 1.1.4 of NPS EN-1, which mirror the requirements of Section 104 of the Planning Act 2008.
	4.1.2	The Energy White Paper and British Energy Security Strategy emphasises the importance of the government's net zero commitment and efforts to fight climate change, as well as the need to maintain a secure and reliable energy system. The Levelling Up White Paper calls on the Government to ensure investment in the transition to Net Zero benefits less well-performing parts of the UK, reducing emissions, facilitating economic development and the creation of jobs.	
	4.1.3	Given the level and urgency of need for infrastructure of the types covered by the energy NPSs set out in Part 3 of this NPS, the Secretary of State will start with a presumption in favour of granting consent to applications for energy NSIPs. That presumption applies unless any more specific and relevant policies set out in the relevant NPSs clearly indicate that consent should be refused.	
	4.1.4	The presumption is also subject to the provisions of the Planning Act 2008 referred to at paragraph 1.1.4 of this NPS.	
Weighing impacts and benefits	4.1.5	In considering any proposed development, in particular when weighing its adverse impacts against its benefits, the Secretary of State should take into account: • its potential benefits including its contribution to meeting the need for energy infrastructure, job creation, reduction of geographical disparities, environmental enhancements, and any long-term or wider benefits; and • its potential adverse impacts, including on the environment, and including any long-term and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce, mitigate or compensate for any adverse impacts, following the mitigation hierarchy.	The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** provides a description of the benefits and adverse impacts of the Scheme (which includes consideration of environmental, social and economic benefits and adverse impacts at national, regional and local levels) and sets out the planning balance (at Section 8.0), concluding that the benefits clearly outweigh all adverse impacts.
	4.1.6	In this context, the Secretary of State should take into account environmental, social and economic benefits and adverse impacts, at national, regional and local levels. These may be identified in this NPS, the relevant technology specific NPS, in the application or	

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
		elsewhere (including in local impact reports, marine plans, and other material considerations as outlined in Section 1.1).	
	4.1.7	Where this NPS or the relevant technology specific NPSs require an applicant to mitigate a particular impact as far as possible, but the Secretary of State considers that there would still be residual adverse effects after the implementation of such mitigation measures, the Secretary of State should weigh those residual effects against the benefits of the proposed development. For projects which qualify as CNP Infrastructure, it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases. This presumption, however, does not apply to residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats or unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero. Further, the same exception applies to this presumption for residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference offshore to navigation, or onshore to flood and coastal erosion risk.	The Applicant has undertaken an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Scheme which is reported in the **Environmental Statement** (ES) **[EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]**. The ES identifies the residual effects of the Scheme following the implementation of mitigation in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 18: Summary of Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. Whilst some residual adverse effects have been identified, none would present an unacceptable risk to human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats, the achievement of net zero or an unacceptable interference to offshore navigation. Furthermore, as set out in the **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** the Scheme would not present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference with, flood risk or coastal erosion risk. Accordingly, the strong presumption in favour of granting consent to CNP Infrastructure applies.
Land rights	4.1.8	Where the use of land at a specific location is required to facilitate the development by providing for mitigation and landscape enhancement, an applicant may, as part of its application to the Secretary of State, seek the compulsory acquisition of that land, or rights over that land.	The Applicant has included compulsory acquisition powers for mitigation and landscape enhancement, as shown on the **Land and Crown Land Plan [EN010141/DR/2.2].** The Applicant has demonstrated that it meets the tests for compulsory acquisition in the **Statement of Reasons (SoR) [EN010141/DR/4.1**], the extent of compulsory acquisition sought by the Applicant is set out in the SoR.
	4.1.9	The Secretary of State will consider any such application under the usual compulsory acquisition principles, taking into account the content of the NPSs.	
Other documents	4.1.10	The policy set out in this NPS and the technology specific energy NPSs is intended to provide greater clarity around existing policy and practice of the Secretary of State in considering applications for nationally significant energy infrastructure, (or therefore the "benchmark" for what is, or is not, an acceptable nationally significant energy development).	The Applicant notes that the NPPF (December 2024) has been updated subsequent to the designation of the NPS (January 2024), and that therefore the NPS does not necessarily take account of updated Government policy within the NPPF. The thrust of the policy changes in the December 2024 update of the NPPF relates to increasing housing delivery and Green Belt and therefore are not of great relevance to the Scheme. The Scheme's compliance with relevant parts of the NPPF is set out in Section 7.0 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].** Parts of the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance for England relevant to the Scheme are also considered in the Environmental Statement.
	4.1.11	The energy NPSs have taken account of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Planning Practice Guidance for England, and Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes (TANs) for Wales, where appropriate.	
	4.1.12	Other matters that the Secretary of State may consider both important and relevant to their decision-making may include Development Plan documents or other documents in the Local Development Framework.	An assessment of the Scheme against Local Development Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plan policies is included within Tables 4 to 9 of this PCD. Key relevant local plan policies are also considered within the Planning Appraisal at Section 7.0 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.
	4.1.13	Where the project conflicts with a proposal in a draft Development Plan, the Secretary of State should take account of the stage which the Development Plan document in England or Local Development Plan in Wales has reached in deciding what weight to give to the plan for the purposes of determining the planning significance of what is replaced, prevented, or precluded.	The Applicant is aware that BBC and HDC are in the process of preparing new local plans. The Bedford Local Plan 2040 has reached an advanced stage in its preparation (it is currently undergoing independent examination). However, the Inspectors overseeing the examination recommended that the plan is withdrawn. Withdrawal of the local plan from the examination process was agreed by the Council's cabinet on the 21st August 2025. In the same meeting the Cabinet also

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	4.1.14	The closer the Development Plan document in England or Local Development Plan in Wales is to being adopted by the LPA, the greater weight which can be attached to it.	authorised the Council's Head of Planning & Building Control to commence work on a new Local Plan to 2046. Accordingly, the draft plan should carry no weight in decision making and the new plan will not be at a sufficiently advanced stage to carry any weight in decision making The update to the adopted Huntingdonshire District Local Plan is also at an early stage in its preparation with consultation on the Preferred Options Local Plan (draft plan) consultation scheduled for autumn 2025. Whilst it will include draft site allocations and planning policies, it remains an early stage in its preparation having received no comment or scrutiny. It will also carry very limited weight in decision making. In light of the foregoing, neither plan has been included in this PCS. Further detail regarding the status and relevance of each emerging plan is provided within the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.
	4.1.15	In the event of a conflict between these documents and an NPS, the NPS prevails for the purpose of Secretary of State decision making given the national significance of the infrastructure.	The Applicant notes that the NPS is the basis of decision making on the Scheme and prevails in any policy conflicts with the Local Development Plan. This is reflected in the assessment provided in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.
Development consent	4.1.16	The Secretary of State should only impose requirements in relation to a development consent that are necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be consented, enforceable, precise, and reasonable in all other respects.	The **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** sets out the proposed Requirements in Schedule 2. These are all considered to be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be consented, enforceable, precise, and reasonable in all other respects.
	4.1.17	The Secretary of State should consider the guidance in the NPPF, the Planning Practice Guidance: Use of Planning Conditions, and TANs, or any successor documents, where appropriate.	
	4.1.18	The Secretary of State may consider any development consent obligations that an applicant agrees with local authorities. These must be relevant to planning, necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, and reasonable in all other respects.	The Applicant is not proposing any development consent obligations, and neither have any been requested by the Local Planning Authorities.
Early engagement	4.1.19	Early engagement both before and at the formal pre-application stage between the applicant and key stakeholders, including public regulators, Statutory Consultees (including Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs)), and those likely to have an interest in a proposed energy infrastructure application, is strongly encouraged in line with the Government's pre-application guidance. This means that only applications which are fully prepared and comprehensive can be accepted for examination, enabling them to be properly assessed by the Examining Authority and leading to a clear recommendation report to the Secretary of State.	The Applicant has engaged constructively with key stakeholders from the outset of the project, with a detailed account of pre-application consultation and engagement set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. It evidences that the Applicant has engaged with a range of statutory consultees and other parties as relevant.
	4.1.20	This is particularly so in the case of HRA matters covered in paragraphs 5.4.25 to 5.4.31 below, which explain the onus is on the applicant to submit sufficient information to enable the Secretary of State to conduct an Appropriate Assessment if required.	The Applicant has engaged with Natural England with regards Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) matters, which is set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]** and in the **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment [EN010141/DR/5.7]**. The latter concludes no likely effects on European sites and therefore no appropriate assessment is considered to be required.

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Financial and technical viability	4.1.21	In deciding to bring forward a proposal for infrastructure development, the applicant will have made a judgement on the financial and technical viability of the proposed development, within the market framework and taking account of government interventions.	The Applicant confirms that the Scheme is financially and technically viable in this location. The Applicant has prepared a **Funding Statement [EN010141/DR/4.2]** that sets out how the Scheme would be funded, and a **Grid Connection Statement [EN010141/DR/7.18]** that demonstrates that the solar and BESS facility can connect to the grid network. The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR5.6]** provides an account of how the siting and design of the Scheme has been developed taking into account a range of considerations including the technical and financial viability.
	4.1.22	Where the Secretary of State considers that the financial viability and technical feasibility of the proposal has been properly assessed by the applicant, it is unlikely to be of relevance in Secretary of State decision making (any exceptions to this principle are dealt with where they arise in this, or other energy NPSs, and the reasons why financial viability or technical feasibility is likely to be of relevance explained).	
The Critical National Priority for Low Carbon Infrastructure			
The critical national priority for low carbon infrastructure	4.2.1	Government has committed to fully decarbonising the power system by 2035, subject to security of supply, to underpin its 2050 net zero ambitions. More than half of final energy demand in 2050 could be met by electricity, as transport and heating in particular shift from fossil fuel to electrical technology.	The Scheme comprising the solar electricity generating station, and associated infrastructure including an on-site substation, grid connection and the BESS is a form of renewable energy generation and therefore meets the definition of CNP Infrastructure.
	4.2.2	Ensuring the UK is more energy independent, resilient and secure requires the smooth transition to abundant, low-carbon energy. The UK's strategy to increase supply of low carbon energy is dependent on deployment of renewable and nuclear power generation, alongside hydrogen and CCUS. Our energy security and net zero ambitions will only be delivered if we can enable the development of new low carbon sources of energy at speed and scale.	
	4.2.3	With smart and strategic planning, the UK can maintain high environmental standards and minimise impacts while increasing the levels of deployment at the scale and pace needed to meet our energy security and net zero ambitions.	
	4.2.4	Government has therefore concluded that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure.	
	4.2.5	This does not extend the definition of what counts as nationally significant infrastructure: the scope remains as set out in the Planning Act 2008. Low carbon infrastructure for the purposes of this policy means: • for electricity generation, all onshore and offshore generation that does not involve fossil fuel combustion (that is, renewable generation, including anaerobic digestion and other plants that convert residual waste into energy, including combustion, provided they meet existing definitions of low carbon; and nuclear generation), as well as natural gas fired generation which is carbon capture ready; • for electricity grid infrastructure, all power lines in scope of EN-5 including network reinforcement and upgrade works, and associated infrastructure such as substations. This is not limited to those associated specifically with a particular generation technology, as all new grid projects will contribute towards greater efficiency in	

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		constructing, operating and connecting low carbon infrastructure to the National Electricity Transmission System; • for other energy infrastructure, fuels, pipelines and storage infrastructure, which fits within the normal definition of "low carbon", such as hydrogen distribution, and carbon dioxide distribution; • for energy infrastructure which is directed into the NSIP regime under section 35 of the Planning Act 2008, and fit within the normal definition of "low carbon", such as interconnectors, Multi-Purpose Interconnectors, or 'bootstraps' to support the onshore network which are routed offshore; and • lifetime extensions of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure, and repowering of projects.	
	4.2.6	The overarching need case for each type of energy infrastructure and the substantial weight which should be given to this need in assessing applications, as set out in paragraphs 3.2.6 to 3.2.8 of EN-1, is the starting point for all assessments of energy infrastructure applications.	The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** provides an appraisal of the CNP Policy at Section 7.3 and in relation to applicable policy tests throughout Section 7.0. Further commentary on CNP Policy is also provided against the relevant paragraphs of NPS EN-1 within this PCD. Section 2.0 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** provides a full and comprehensive Statement of Need. The impacts, effects and mitigation for the Scheme are set out within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1].** The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment [EN010141/DR/5.7]** concludes that there would be no likely effects on European sites and therefore no appropriate assessment is required.
	4.2.7	The CNP policy does not create an additional or cumulative need case or weighting to that which is already outlined for each type of energy infrastructure. The policy applies following the normal consideration of the need case, the impacts of the project, and the application of the mitigation hierarchy. As such, it is relevant during Secretary of State decision making and specifically in reference to any residual impacts that have been identified. It should therefore also be given consideration by the Examining Authority when it is making its recommendation to the Secretary of State.	
	4.2.8	During decision making, the CNP policy will influence how non-HRA and non-MCZ residual impacts are considered in the planning balance. The policy will therefore also influence how the Secretary of State considers whether tests requiring clear outweighing of harm, exceptionality, or very special circumstances have been met by a CNP Infrastructure application. Further detail is provided in paragraphs 4.2.15 to 4.2.17, and Figure 2.	
	4.2.9	During decision making, the CNP policy also explains the Secretary of State's approach to HRA derogations and MCZ assessments. Specifically, the policy explains how the alternative solutions and IROPI tests are considered by the Secretary of State. Further detail is provided in paragraphs 4.2.18 to 4.2.22, and Figure 3.	
Applicant's Assessment	4.2.10	Applicants for CNP infrastructure must continue to show how their application meets the requirements in this NPS and the relevant technology specific NPS, applying the mitigation hierarchy, as well as any other legal and regulatory requirements.	This PCD and the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** set out in detail how the Scheme complies with the requirements of NPS EN-1, NPS EN-3 and NPS EN-5 and other relevant policy and legislation. The Applicant has applied the mitigation hierarchy through the EIA process, and this is reported within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3],** on a topic-by-topic basis within Section 7.0 the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, and summarised the approach adopted within Section 7.3. The summary states that through a clear application of the mitigation hierarchy applied uniformly in the
	4.2.11	Applicants must apply the mitigation hierarchy and demonstrate that it has been applied. They should also seek the advice of the appropriate SNCB or other relevant statutory	

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		body when undertaking this process. Applicants should demonstrate that all residual impacts are those that cannot be avoided, reduced or mitigated.	assessments of biodiversity, landscape, heritage, flood risk and other relevant topics, the Scheme has demonstrated a rigorous approach to mitigating environmental harm at source, and that residual effects are as low as reasonably practicable. Detail of consultation with statutory environmental bodies and the LPA is provided in relevant assessment chapters of the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** as well as the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. The management plans primarily including **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]; outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]**; and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** set out how mitigation and compensation measures will be monitored and reported throughout the life of the development to ensure that the measures proposed achieve their agreed objective. The potential cumulative impacts of the Scheme have been assessed and reported within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Cumulative and In Combination Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	4.2.12	Applicants should set out how residual impacts will be compensated for as far as possible. Applicants should also set out how any mitigation or compensation measures will be monitored and reporting agreed to ensure success and that action is taken. Changes to measures may be needed e.g. adaptive management. The cumulative impacts of multiple developments with residual impacts should also be considered.	
	4.2.13	Where residual impacts relate to HRA or MCZ sites then the Applicant must provide a derogation case, if required, in the normal way in compliance with the relevant legislation and guidance.	The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment [EN010141/DR/5.7]** concludes the Scheme would not result in likely significant adverse effects on European Sites. Therefore neither a derogation under the Habitat Regulations is not required, nor is a case for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest.
Secretary of State Decision Making	4.2.14	The Secretary of State will continue to consider the impacts and benefits of all CNP Infrastructure applications on a case-by-case basis. The Secretary of State must be satisfied that the applicant's assessment demonstrates that the requirements set out above have been met. Where the Secretary of State is satisfied that they have been met, the CNP presumptions set out below apply.	This PCD and the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** set out the Scheme's compliance with the relevant provisions of the NPS, and that the CNP presumptions apply.
Non-HRA and non-MCZ residual impacts of Critical National Priority Infrastructure	4.2.15	Where residual non-HRA or non-MCZ impacts remain after the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, these residual impacts are unlikely to outweigh the urgent need for this type of infrastructure. Therefore, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that consent will be refused on the basis of these residual impacts. The exception to this presumption of consent are residual impacts onshore and offshore which present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats or unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero. Further, the same exception applies to this presumption for residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference offshore to navigation, or onshore to flood and coastal erosion risk.	No residual adverse effects have been identified that present an unacceptable risk to or unacceptable interference with human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats, the achievement of net zero, offshore navigation or present a coastal erosion risk. Furthermore, as set out in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** the Scheme would not present an unacceptable risk to flood risk. Accordingly, the strong presumption in favour of granting consent to CNP Infrastructure applies, and the Secretary of State can take as a starting point that the Scheme meets all tests which require a clear outweighing of harm, exceptionality or very special circumstances.
	4.2.16	As a result, the Secretary of State will take as the starting point for decision-making that such infrastructure is to be treated as if it has met any tests which are set out within the NPSs, or any other planning policy, which requires a clear outweighing of harm, exceptionality or very special circumstances.	
	4.2.17	This means that the Secretary of State will take as a starting point that CNP Infrastructure will meet the following, non-exhaustive, list of tests: • where development within a Green Belt requires very special circumstances to justify development;	

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		• where development within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) requires the benefits (including need) of the development in the location proposed to clearly outweigh both the likely impact on features of the site that make it a SSSI, and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSIs. • where development in nationally designated landscapes requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated; and • where substantial harm to or loss of significance to heritage assets should be exceptional or wholly exceptional.	
HRA derogations and MCZ assessments for Critical National Priority Infrastructure	4.2.18	Any HRA or MCZ residual impacts will continue to be considered under the framework set out in the Habitats Regulations and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 respectively.	The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment [EN010141/DR/5.7]** concludes the Scheme would not result in likely significant adverse effects on European Sites, and therefore appropriate assessment is not required, a derogation under the Habitat Regulations is not required, and a case for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest is not required.
	4.2.19	Where, following Appropriate Assessment, CNP Infrastructure has residual adverse impacts on the integrity of sites forming part of the UK national site network, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, the Secretary of State will consider making a derogation under the Habitats Regulations.	
	4.2.20	Similarly, if during an MCZ assessment, CNP Infrastructure has residual impacts which significantly risk hindering the achievement of the stated conservation objectives for the MCZ, the Secretary of State will consider making a derogation under section 126(7) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.	
	4.2.21	For both derogations, the Secretary of State will consider the particular circumstances of any plan or project, but starting from the position that energy security and decarbonising the power sector to combat climate change: • requires a significant number of deliverable locations for CNP Infrastructure and for each location to maximise its capacity. This NPS imposes no limit on the number of CNP infrastructure projects that may be consented. Therefore, the fact that there are other potential plans or projects deliverable in different locations to meet the need for CNP Infrastructure is unlikely to be treated as an alternative solution. Further, the existence of another way of developing the proposed plan or project which results in a significantly lower generation capacity is unlikely to meet the objectives and therefore be treated as an alternative solution; and • are capable of amounting to imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for HRAs, and, for MCZ assessments, the benefit to the public is capable of outweighing the risk of environmental damage, for CNP Infrastructure.	
	4.2.22	For HRAs, where an applicant has shown there are no deliverable alternative solutions, and that there are IROPI, compensatory measures must be secured by the Secretary of State as the competent authority, to offset the adverse effects to site integrity as part of a derogation. For MCZs, where an applicant has shown there are no other means of proceeding which would create a substantially lower risk, and the benefit to the public outweighs the risk of damage to the environment, the Secretary of State must be satisfied that measures of equivalent environmental benefit will be undertaken.	

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Environmental Effects/Considerations			
Environmental Effects / Considerations	4.3.1	All proposals for projects that are subject to the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) must be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) describing the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project.	In accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the Applicant has undertaken an EIA for the Scheme which is reported in the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]**. An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 30 October 2023. The Planning Inspectorate reviewed and consulted on the EIA Scoping Report and published a Scoping Opinion on 8 December 2023 (the Scoping Opinion) which included the formal responses received by the Planning Inspectorate from consultees. The ES is based on the Scoping Opinion and includes the following chapters: • Chapter 1 - Introduction • Chapter 2 - The Scheme • Chapter 3 - Alternatives and Design Evolution • Chapter 4 - Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology • Chapter 5 - Landscape and Visual • Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage and Archaeology • Chapter 7 - Ecology and Nature Conservation • Chapter 8 – Hydrology and Flood Risk • Chapter 9 - Traffic and Transport • Chapter 10 - Noise and Vibration • Chapter 11 - Air Quality • Chapter 12 - Ground Conditions • Chapter 13 - Land and Soils • Chapter 14 – Socio-Economics, Land Use and Tourism • Chapter 15 – Climate Change • Chapter 16 – Other Environmental Topics • Chapter 17 – Cumulative and Intra-Project Effects • Chapter 18 - Summary of Environmental Effects The ES reports on the likely significant effects of the Scheme including environmental, social and economic effects, as well as the potential cumulative impacts of the Scheme in combination with other consented or emerging developments.
	4.3.2	The Regulations specifically refer to effects on population, human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, the landscape, material assets and cultural heritage, and the interaction between them.	
	4.3.3	The Regulations require an assessment of the likely significant effects of the proposed project on the environment, covering the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short, medium, and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects at all stages of the project, and also of the measures envisaged for avoiding or mitigating significant adverse effects.	
	4.3.4	To consider the potential effects, including benefits, of a proposal for a project, the applicant must set out information on the likely significant environmental, social and economic effects of the development, and show how any likely significant negative effects would be avoided, reduced, mitigated or compensated for, following the mitigation hierarchy. This information could include matters such as employment, equality, biodiversity net gain, community cohesion, health and well-being.	
	4.3.5	For the purposes of this NPS and the technology specific NPSs the ES should cover the environmental, social and economic effects arising from pre-construction, construction, operation and decommissioning of the project.	
	4.3.6	Where the NPSs use the term 'environment' they are referring to both the natural and historic environments.	
	4.3.7	In the absence of any additional information on additional assessments, the principles set out in this Section will apply to all assessments.	
	4.3.8	In this NPS and the technology specific NPSs, when used in relation to environmental matters the terms 'effects', 'impacts' or 'benefits' should be understood to mean likely significant effects, likely significant impacts, or likely significant benefits.	
	4.3.9	As in any planning case, the relevance or otherwise to the decision making process of the existence (or alleged existence) of alternatives to the proposed development is, in the first instance, a matter of law. This NPS does not contain any general requirement to consider alternatives or to establish whether the proposed project represents the best option from a policy perspective. Although there are specific requirements in relation to compulsory	The alternatives considered by the Applicant are set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. This includes consideration of alternative sites, alternative solar technologies, and an overview of the Scheme's design evolution and alternative design considerations. The chapter is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report**

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		acquisition and habitats sites, the NPS does not change requirements in relation to compulsory acquisition and habitats sites.	**[EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2: Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** which set out the alternative site options considered by the Applicant. Further detail on the design evolution and consideration of design alternatives is provided within the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** which sets out the framework and process followed for decision-making on design that has resulted in the Scheme.
Applicant's Assessment	4.3.10	The applicant must provide information proportionate to the scale of the project, ensuring the information is sufficient to meet the requirements of the EIA Regulations.	The **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** has been prepared pursuant to the EIA Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate, and in accordance with the requirements of the relevent EIA Regulations. The scope of the ES is proportionate to the scale of the project and has also been refined through pre-application engagement with the local planning authorities, statutory environmental bodies, and other stakeholders as reported in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**.
	4.3.11	In some instances, it may not be possible at the time of the application for development consent for all aspects of the proposal to have been settled in precise detail. Where this is the case, the applicant should explain in its application which elements of the proposal have yet to be finalised, and the reasons why this is the case.	The precise layout of the Scheme and equipment selection have not been finalised. It is therefore essential to provide a degree of flexibility within the draft DCO to allow the detailed design to react to these variables. The technical assessments within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** have therefore assessed an 'envelope' within which the works will take place, defined using a parameter-based approach as set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]**. As such, the ES has been based upon maximum and, where relevant, minimum parameters and defined work areas (shown on the **Works Plans [EN010141/DR/2.3]**) where development can take place. The design parameters are based on industry knowledge and best practice such that a sufficient degree of flexibility is provided within the draft DCO. These parameters are considered in detail in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and across the individual assessments within the ES to ensure the reasonable worst-case effects of the Scheme are assessed for each potential receptor. This ensures the 'likely significant effects' are identified.
	4.3.12	Where some details are still to be finalised, the ES should, to the best of the applicant's knowledge, assess the likely worst-case environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed development to ensure that the impacts of the project as it may be constructed have been properly assessed.	
	4.3.13	To help the Secretary of State consider thoroughly the potential effects of a proposed project in cases where the EIA Regulations do not apply and an ES is not therefore required, the applicant should instead provide information proportionate to the scale of the project on the likely significant environmental, social, and economic effects.	The Scheme is 'EIA Development' and an **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** has been provided.
	4.3.14	References to an ES in this NPS and the technology specific NPSs should be taken as including a statement which provides this information, even if the EIA Regulations do not apply. Where the NPSs require specific information to be provided in the ES, such information should still be provided in this statement.	
	4.3.15	Applicants are obliged to include in their ES, information about the reasonable alternatives they have studied. This should include an indication of the main reasons for the applicant's choice, taking into account the environmental, social and economic effects and including, where relevant, technical and commercial feasibility.	The alternatives considered by the Applicant are set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. This includes consideration of alternative sites, alternative solar technologies, and an overview of the project's design evolution and alternative design considerations.
	4.3.16	In some circumstances, the NPSs may impose a policy requirement to consider alternatives.	

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	4.3.17	Where there is a policy or legal requirement to consider alternatives, the applicant should describe the alternatives considered in compliance with these requirements.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	4.3.18	The Secretary of State should consider the worst-case impacts in its consideration of the application and consent, providing some flexibility in the consent to account for uncertainties in specific project details.	As set out above (in the statement of compliance for paragraphs 4.3.11 and 4.3.12), the Applicant's **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** reports the worst-case impacts of the Scheme. The assumptions made on design parameters and the approach to the Rochdale Envelope are set out **in ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	4.3.19	The Secretary of State should consider how the accumulation of, and interrelationship between, effects might affect the environment, economy, or community as a whole, even though they may be acceptable when considered on an individual basis with mitigation measures in place.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Cumulative and Intra-Project Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant cumulative effects of the Scheme, which includes a consideration of both the in-combination intra-project effects, and the cumulative inter-project effects. The assessment concludes that there would be no significant cumulative inter- or intra-project effects.
	4.3.20	The Government has set 13 legally binding targets for England under the Environment Act 2021, covering the areas of: biodiversity; air quality; water; resource efficiency and waste reduction; tree and woodland cover; and Marine Protected Areas. Meeting the legally binding targets will be a shared endeavour that will require a whole of government approach to delivery. The Secretary of State have regard to the ambitions, goals and targets set out in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for improving the natural environment and heritage. This includes having regard to the achievement of statutory targets set under the Environment Act.	The Applicant has had regard to the Environment Act 2021 in preparing the DCO Application. **The Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** provides an assessment undertaken utilising DEFRA's Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculator to provide evidence of an achievable on-site gain in biodiversity units.
	4.3.22	Given the level and urgency of need for new energy infrastructure, the Secretary of State should, subject to any relevant legal requirements (e.g. under the Habitats Regulations) which indicate otherwise, be guided by the following principles when deciding what weight should be given to alternatives: • the consideration of alternatives in order to comply with policy requirements should be carried out in a proportionate manner; and • only alternatives that can meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be considered.	The alternatives considered by the Applicant are set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. This includes consideration of alternative sites, alternative solar technologies, and an overview of the project's design evolution and alternative design considerations. Further detail on the design evolution and consideration of design alternatives is provided within the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** which sets out the design principles and approach that has resulted in the Scheme. Together, **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** set out the main reasons for the Applicant's choices taking into account environmental, social, economic effects and technical and commercial feasibility. The Applicant has also addressed comments raised by members of the public with regard to potential alternatives within the **Consultation Report Appendices [EN010141/DR/5.2]**. The Applicant's approach is in alignment with the approach in the NPS towards alternatives. The approach taken to adopting good design, developing the design to respond to feedback, and ensuring the design chosen is deliverable is proportionate, balancing the realistic prospect of the alternative alongside the need for commercial and technical feasibility.
	4.3.23	The Secretary of State should be guided in considering alternative proposals by whether there is a realistic prospect of the alternative delivering the same infrastructure capacity (including energy security, climate change, and other environmental benefits) in the same timescale as the proposed development.	
	4.3.24	The Secretary of State should not refuse an application for development on one site simply because fewer adverse impacts would result from developing similar infrastructure on another suitable site, and should have regard as appropriate to the possibility that all suitable sites for energy infrastructure of the type proposed may be needed for future proposals.	

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	4.3.25	Alternatives not among the main alternatives studied by the applicant (as reflected in the ES) should only be considered to the extent that the Secretary of State thinks they are both important and relevant to the decision.	
	4.3.26	As the Secretary of State must assess an application in accordance with the relevant NPS (subject to the exceptions set out in section 104 of the Planning Act 2008), if the Secretary of State concludes that a decision to grant consent to a hypothetical alternative proposal would not be in accordance with the policies set out in the relevant NPS, the existence of that alternative is unlikely to be important and relevant to the Secretary of State's decision.	
	4.3.27	Alternative proposals which mean the necessary development could not proceed, for example because the alternative proposals are not commercially viable or alternative proposals for sites would not be physically suitable, can be excluded on the grounds that they are not important and relevant to the Secretary of State's decision.	
	4.3.28	Alternative proposals which are vague or immature can be excluded on the grounds that they are not important and relevant to the Secretary of State's decision.	
	4.3.29	It is intended that potential alternatives to a proposed development should, wherever possible, be identified before an application is made to the Secretary of State (so as to allow appropriate consultation and the development of a suitable evidence base in relation to any alternatives which are particularly relevant). Therefore, where an alternative is first put forward by a third party after an application has been made, the Secretary of State may place the onus on the person proposing the alternative to provide the evidence for its suitability as such and the Secretary of State should not necessarily expect the applicant to have assessed it.	
Health			
Health	4.4.1	Energy infrastructure has the potential to impact on the health and well-being ("health") of the population. Access to energy is clearly beneficial to society and to our health as a whole. However, the construction of energy infrastructure and the production, distribution and use of energy may have negative impacts on some people's health.	An assessment of the human health impacts of the Scheme is provided in Section 16.2 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The Chapter concludes that there would be very limited adverse effects of the Scheme on human health and none that would be significant in EIA terms. The **outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.10]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** consider the potential hazards associated with the BESS and describe the mitigation measures that have been embedded into the design of the Scheme to ensure that the associated risks are acceptable. This takes into consideration the standing advice that has been given by the fire authorities during pre-application consultation. The measures contained within the **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.10]**, **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.14], outline Soil Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.15], outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.16**], **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]; outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]; outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6];** and **outline Landscape**
	4.4.2	The direct impacts on health may include • increased traffic; • air or water pollution; • dust, odour; • hazardous waste and substances; • noise; • exposure to radiation; and	

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		• increases in pests.	**and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** to avoid and reduce risks relating to human health (e.g. the Protection to the Public measures at Section 4 of the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan[EN010141/DR/7.5]**) would be secured as full Management Plans within the DCO and associated Requirements. With reference to 4.4.6, the benefits of the Scheme on the local area and local community are summarised in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].**
	4.4.3	New energy infrastructure may also affect the composition and size of the local population, and in doing so have indirect health impacts, for example if it in some way affects access to key public services, transport, or the use of open space for recreation and physical activity.	
Applicant's Assessment	4.4.4	As described in the relevant sections of this NPS and in the technology specific NPSs, where the proposed project has an effect on humans, the ES should assess these effects for each element of the project, identifying any potential adverse health impacts, and identifying measures to avoid, reduce or compensate for these impacts as appropriate.	
	4.4.5	The impacts of more than one development may affect people simultaneously, so the applicant should consider the cumulative impact on health in the ES where appropriate.	
	4.4.6	Opportunities should be taken to mitigate indirect impacts, by promoting local improvements to encourage health and wellbeing, this includes potential impacts on vulnerable groups within society and impacts on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, i.e. those groups which may be differentially impacted by a development compared to wider society as a whole.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	4.4.7	Generally, those aspects of energy infrastructure which are most likely to have a significantly detrimental impact on health are subject to separate regulation (for example for air pollution) which will constitute effective mitigation of them, so that it is unlikely that health concerns will either by themselves constitute a reason to refuse consent or require specific mitigation under the Planning Act 2008.	
	4.4.8	However, not all potential sources of health impacts will be mitigated in this way and the Secretary of State may want to take account of health concerns when setting requirements relating to a range of impacts such as noise.	
Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain			
Environmental and biodiversity net gain	4.6.1	Environmental net gain is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand. Projects should therefore not only avoid, mitigate and compensate harms, following the mitigation hierarchy, but also consider whether there are opportunities for enhancements.	The Applicant has planned to achieve environmental gains from the outset of the Scheme. The design team includes Landscape Architects and Ecologists who have developed the **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** to achieve both mitigation of the Scheme's adverse impacts, as well as opportunities for enhancement. Such opportunities have included the retention of public rights of way, provision of new permissive paths (in Site B), retention of existing trees, scrub and hedgerows as far as possible, and provision of new grassland, hedgerow and woodland habitats. Whist it is not currently a mandatory requirement for NSIP Schemes (it is expected to become mandatory for NSIPs from May 2026), for robustness the biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment has
	4.6.2	Biodiversity net gain is an essential component of environmental net gain. Projects in England should consider and seek to incorporate improvements in natural capital, ecosystem services and the benefits they deliver when planning how to deliver biodiversity net gain.	

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	4.6.3	Currently biodiversity net gain policy in England only applies to terrestrial and intertidal components of projects. Principles for Marine Net Gain are currently being rolled out by the Government, who will provide guidance in due course. There are provisions in the Environment Act 2021 to allow Marine Net Gain to be made mandatory for NSIPs in the future.	been undertaken in accordance with DEFRA's latest Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and the calculation is presented in full within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** confirms that there will be a gain of 79.51% in area-based habitat units, 36.91% in hedgerow units, and 5.95% in watercourse units. While a 10% gain is not achieved in relation to watercourse units, the habitat creation measures as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals and to be secured through the **oLEMP [EN010141/DR/7.7]** will enhance the bank top habitat of ditches and watercourses throughout the Site. However, as a result of failures of baseline ditch condition assessment criteria related principally to low water levels and frequent drying (which is outside the control of the Scheme), the bankside habitat enhancement is not taken as enhancing the condition of watercourses within the Metric. Therefore, whilst the Scheme achieves no net loss of watercourse units, the quantitative gain in the Metric does not achieve 10%. The Scheme proposals nonetheless represent a qualitative gain of value to local biodiversity. Overall, it is concluded in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** that the Scheme will deliver a net gain for biodiversity, and that the change in units generated as part of the Scheme are proportionate to the levels of impact, with the Scheme providing other qualitative measures to enhance biodiversity. At the detailed design stage the Applicant will seek to maximise BNG as far as practicable (as per Design Principle 4.1 of the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]**). It may ultimately be possible to achieve a greater BNG for all habitat types compared to the current assessment of the illustrative design. Nonetheless, as the assessment has been based on an illustrative design, out of caution and to avoid any future compliance issue, the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy. Further discussion on this matter is presented in Section 7 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].**
Applicant's Assessment	4.6.6	Energy NSIP proposals, whether onshore or offshore, should seek opportunities to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by providing net gains for biodiversity, and the wider environment where possible.	
	4.6.7	In England applicants for onshore elements of any development are encouraged to use the latest version of the biodiversity metric to calculate their biodiversity baseline and present planned biodiversity net gain outcomes. This calculation data should be presented in full as part of their application.	
	4.6.8	Where possible, this data should be shared, alongside a completed biodiversity metric calculation, with the Local Authority and Natural England for discussion at the pre-application stage as it can help to highlight biodiversity and wider environmental issues which may later cause delays if not addressed.	
	4.6.10	Biodiversity net gain should be applied after compliance with the mitigation hierarchy and does not change or replace existing environmental obligations, although compliance with those obligations will be relevant to the question of the baseline for assessing net gain and if they deliver an additional enhancement beyond meeting the existing obligation, that enhancement will count towards net gain.	The Applicant has followed a mitigation hierarchy as set out in the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** and on a topic-by-topic basis within Section 7.0 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**. The BNG assessment presented within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17],** has been undertaken after compliance with the mitigation hierarchy (i.e. the BNG assessment has only measured gains which are in addition to the mitigation hierarchy) The results of the BNG assessment are presented within the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** on the basis that this is a planning matter rather than an EIA matter.

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	4.6.11	Biodiversity net gain can be delivered onsite or wholly or partially off-site. We encourage details of any off-site delivery of biodiversity net gain to be set out within the application for development consent.	The Applicant is not proposing any off-site works for biodiversity net gain. The Scheme would deliver all biodiversity net gain entirely within the Order limits
	4.6.12	When delivering biodiversity net gain off-site, developments should do this in a manner that best contributes to the achievement of relevant wider strategic outcomes, for example by increasing habitat connectivity, enhancing other ecosystem service outcomes, or considering use of green infrastructure strategies. Reference should be made to relevant national or local plans and strategies, to inform off-site biodiversity net gain delivery. If published, the relevant strategy is the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). If an LNRS has not been published, the relevant consenting body or planning authority may specify alternative plans, policies or strategies to use.	
	4.6.13	In addition to delivering biodiversity net gain, developments may also deliver wider environmental gains and benefits to communities relevant to the local area, and to national policy priorities, such as: • reductions in GHG emissions; • reduced flood risk; • improvements to air or water quality; • climate adaptation; • landscape enhancement; • increased access to natural greenspace; or • the enhancement, expansion or provision of trees and woodlands. The scope of potential gains will be dependent on the type, scale, and location of specific projects. Applicants should look for a holistic approach to delivering wider environmental gains and benefits through the use of nature-based solutions and Green Infrastructure.	In addition to the considerable BNG set out in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17],** the Scheme would also deliver multiple benefits which are summarised in Section 5.0 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** and include: • Significant reduction in greenhouse emissions over the lifetime of the project (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1])** • Increased access to natural greenspace noting the measures set out within the **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]** • The enhancement, expansion or provision of trees and woodland (**Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**); and • A reduction of flood risk and improvement in natural flood management. The surface water drainage infrastructure proposed in connection with the scheme (which takes into account future changes in climate) and the landscaping proposed in connection with the Scheme would, in combination, ensure that overland flows of water are captured and managed in a more controlled manner, reducing flood risk. The establishment of permanent grasslands and increased tree and woodland cover would improve natural flood management by slowing the flow of surface water run-off into nearby watercourses, including the River Kym. These flood risk benefits are discussed further in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**
	4.6.14	The Environment Act 2021 mandated the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) across England. They are a new system of spatial strategies for nature recovery and will play a major role in providing detail on the best locations to create, enhance and restore nature and deliver wider environmental benefits. LNRSs will also agree priorities for nature recovery and map the most valuable existing areas for nature. They will be critical in delivering new government targets for species abundance and habitat creation commitments, as well as other pressing environmental outcomes for water and flood risk, carbon and tree planting and woodland creations. LNRSs will also drive the creation of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN), a major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.	There is currently no Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) that applies to the Order limits.
	4.6.15	Applications for development consent should be accompanied by a statement demonstrating how opportunities for delivering wider environmental net gains have been	The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out how opportunities for environmental enhancement and opportunity have been considered as part of the design process. The Scheme goes

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		considered, and where appropriate, incorporated into proposals as part of good design (including any relevant operational aspects) of the project.	beyond just mitigation and compensation and delivers wider gains for biodiversity, creating a richer mosaic of habitats and long-term management commitments that will leave a positive ecological legacy.
	4.6.16	Applicants should make use of available guidance and tools for measuring natural capital assets and ecosystem services, such as the Natural Capital Committee's 'How to Do it: natural capital workbook', the government's guidance on Enabling a Natural Capital Approach (ENCA), and other tools that aim to enable wider benefits for people and nature.	
	4.6.17	Where environmental net gain considerations have featured as part of the strategic options appraisal process to select a project, applicants should reference that information to supplement the site-specific details.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	*4.6.1 [sic]* 4.6.19	Although achieving biodiversity net gain is not currently an obligation on applicants, Schedule 15 of the Environment Act 2021 contains provisions which, when commenced, mean the Secretary of State may not grant an application for a Development Consent Order unless satisfied that a biodiversity gain objective is met in relation to the onshore development in England to which the application relates.	Whist it is not currently a mandatory requirement for NSIP Schemes (it is expected to become mandatory for NSIPs from May 2026), for robustness the biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment has been undertaken in accordance with DEFRA's latest Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and the calculation is presented in full within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** confirms that there will be a gain of 79.51% in area-based habitat units, 36.91% in hedgerow units, and 5.95% in watercourse units. While a 10% gain is not achieved in relation to watercourses, the habitat creation measures as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals and to be secured through the **oLEMP [EN010141/DR/7.7]** will enhance the bank top habitat of ditches and watercourses throughout the Site. However, as a result of failures of baseline ditch condition assessment criteria related principally to low water levels and frequent drying (which is outside the control of the Scheme), the bankside habitat enhancement is not taken as enhancing the condition of watercourses within the Metric. Therefore, whilst the Scheme achieves no net loss of watercourse units, the quantitative gain in the Metric does not achieve 10%. The Scheme proposals nonetheless represent a qualitative gain of value to local biodiversity. Overall, it is concluded in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** that the Scheme will deliver a net gain for biodiversity, and that the change in units generated as part of the Scheme are proportionate to the levels of impact, with the Scheme providing other qualitative measures to enhance biodiversity At the detailed design stage the Applicant will seek to maximise BNG as far as practicable (as per Design Principle 4.1 secured by the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]**). It may ultimately be possible to achieve a greater BNG for all habitat types compared to the current assessment of the illustrative design. Nonetheless, as the assessment has been based on an illustrative design, out of caution and to avoid any future compliance issue, the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy.
	4.6.2 [sic] 4.6.20	The biodiversity gain objective will be set out in a biodiversity gain statement (as defined under the Environment Act 2021). Normally these statements would be included within an NPS, but the Act allows for the statement to be published separately where a review of an NPS has begun before the provisions are commenced, as is the case with these energy NPSs. Under the provision of the Environment Act 2021, any such separate biodiversity gain statement will be regarded as being contained within these NPSs.	
	4.6.3 [sic] 4.6.21	The Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to environmental and biodiversity net gain, although any weight given to gains provided to meet a legal requirement (for example under the Environment Act 2021) is likely to be limited.	

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			Further discussion on this matter is presented in Section 7 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].**
Criteria for Good Design for Energy Infrastructure			
Good design for energy infrastructure	4.7.1	The visual appearance of a building, structure, or piece of infrastructure, and how it relates to the landscape it sits within, is sometimes considered to be the most important factor in good design. But high quality and inclusive design goes far beyond aesthetic considerations. The functionality of an object – be it a building or other type of infrastructure – including fitness for purpose and sustainability, is equally important.	The Applicant has prepared a **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** which sets out the design process that has been followed from inception of the project to submission of the DCO, and how the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Good Design has been followed. Section 6.0 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out how good design would be secured as part of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the established design principles will be integrated within the final design post consent. The Design Principles (set out within Section 3.0 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**) have been used to fundamentally guide and shape the approach to the design of the Scheme. Design Principle 2: aims to develop the proposals in a manner sensitive to their landscape setting, reducing visual impacts from nearby properties, recreational routes and key viewpoints.
	4.7.2	Applying good design to energy projects should produce sustainable infrastructure sensitive to place, including impacts on heritage, efficient in the use of natural resources, including land-use, and energy used in their construction and operation, matched by an appearance that demonstrates good aesthetic as far as possible. It is acknowledged, however that the nature of energy infrastructure development will often limit the extent to which it can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of the area.	
	4.7.3	Good design is also a means by which many policy objectives in the NPSs can be met, for example the impact sections show how good design, in terms of siting and use of appropriate technologies, can help mitigate adverse impacts such as noise. Projects should look to use modern methods of construction and sustainable design practices such as use of sustainable timber and low carbon concrete. Where possible, projects should include the reuse of material.	
	4.7.4	Given the benefits of good design in mitigating the adverse impacts of a project, applicants should consider how good design can be applied to a project during the early stages of the project lifecycle.	
Applicant's Assessment	4.7.5	To ensure good design is embedded within the project development, a project board level design champion could be appointed, and a representative design panel used to maximise the value provided by the infrastructure. Design principles should be established from the outset of the project to guide the development from conception to operation. Applicants should consider how their design principles can be applied post-consent.	
	4.7.6	Whilst the applicant may not have any or very limited choice in the physical appearance of some energy infrastructure, there may be opportunities for the applicant to demonstrate good design in terms of siting relative to existing landscape character, land form and vegetation. Furthermore, the design and sensitive use of materials in any associated development such as electricity substations will assist in ensuring that such development contributes to the quality of the area. Applicants should also, so far as is possible, seek to embed opportunities for nature inclusive design within the design process.	
	4.7.7	Applicants must demonstrate in their application documents how the design process was conducted and how the proposed design evolved. Where a number of different designs	The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** explains how the design process has been conducted. It presents the vision and design principles that have guided the process, how the design of

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		were considered, applicants should set out the reasons why the favoured choice has been selected.	the Scheme has evolved through each stage of the pre-application development process, how consultation feedback at each stage has guided design changes, and how the outcomes of environmental surveys and assessment have been integrated with the process.
	4.7.8	Applicants should consider taking independent professional advice on the design aspects of a proposal. In particular, the Design Council can be asked to provide design review for nationally significant infrastructure projects and applicants are encouraged to use this service. Applicants should also consider any design guidance developed by the local planning authority.	The Applicant has not taken independent professional advice on the design of the Scheme, but has welcomed feedback from the local planning authority, statutory environmental bodies, stakeholders, and members of the public on the design of the project. Feedback on the design of the Scheme is summarised within the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]** and the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**. The Applicant is justified in not seeking independent design advice as the scope of potential design input on a solar development is limited. There is no architectural design input required for a solar energy generating station, and therefore the Applicant's existing project team that includes experienced Landscape Architects, Environmental Consultants, and Ecologists was considered suitable to lead on Scheme design.
	4.7.9	Further advice on what applicants should demonstrate by way of good design is provided in the technology specific NPSs where relevant.	The extent to which the Scheme complies with the relevant design guidance in NPS EN-3 and NPS EN-5 is summarised in Tables 2 and 3 of this PCD.
Secretary of State Decision Making	4.7.10	In the light of the above and given the importance which the Planning Act 2008 places on good design and sustainability, the Secretary of State needs to be satisfied that energy infrastructure developments are sustainable and, having regard to regulatory and other constraints, are as attractive, durable, and adaptable (including taking account of natural hazards such as flooding) as they can be.	The Applicant has prepared a **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** which sets out the design process that has been followed from the inception of the project, and how the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Good Design has been followed. Section 6.0 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out how good design is secured as part of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the established design principles will be integrated with the final design post consent.
	4.7.11	In doing so, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the applicant has considered both functionality (including fitness for purpose and sustainability) and aesthetics (including its contribution to the quality of the area in which it would be located, any potential amenity benefits, and visual impacts on the landscape or seascape) as far as possible.	
	4.7.12	In considering applications, the Secretary of State should take into account the ultimate purpose of the infrastructure and bear in mind the operational, safety and security requirements which the design has to satisfy. Many of the wider impacts of a development, such as landscape and environmental impacts, will be important factors in the design process.	The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** explains how the design process has been conducted. It has been prepared in accordance with the relevent PINS advice note, it: • presents the vision and design principles that have guided the process, • confirms how the design of the Scheme has evolved through each stage of the pre-application development process, • sets out how consultation feedback at each stage has guided design changes, and • confirms how the outcomes of environmental surveys and assessment have been integrated with the process. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 4: EIA Methodology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the EIA has been based on the full lifecycle of the project including construction, operation and decommissioning.
	4.7.13	The Secretary of State should consider such impacts under the relevant policies in this NPS. Assessment of impacts must be for the stated design life of the scheme rather than a shorter time period.	

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	4.7.14	The Secretary of State should consider taking independent professional advice on the design aspects of a proposal. In particular, the Design Council can be asked to provide design review for nationally significant infrastructure projects.	The Applicant notes that the Secretary of State may consider taking independent professional advice on the design of the Scheme. Relevant design guidance from NPS EN-3 and NPS EN-5 is summarised in Tables 2 and 3 of this PCD.
	4.7.15	Further advice on what the Secretary of State should expect applicants to demonstrate by way of good design is provided in the technology specific NPSs where relevant.	
Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience			
Climate change adaptation and resilience	4.10.1	Whilst we must continue to accelerate efforts to end our contribution to climate change by reaching Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation is also necessary to manage the impacts of current and future climate change. If new energy infrastructure is not sufficiently resilient against the possible impacts of climate change, it will not be able to satisfy the energy needs as outlined in Part 3 of this NPS.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and supporting appendices provide an assessment of the Scheme in the context of climate change resilience and its potential greenhouse gas emissions. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1],** which is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2],** assesses the effects of climate change in relation to flood risk. The assessments demonstrate that the Scheme would be resilient against the possible impacts of climate change.
	4.10.2	Climate change is already altering the UK's weather patterns and this will continue to accelerate depending on global carbon emissions. This means it is likely there will be more extreme weather events. As well as climatic and seasonal changes such as hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters, there is also a likelihood of increased flooding, drought, heatwaves, and intense rainfall events, as well as rising sea levels, increased storms and coastal change. Adaptation is therefore necessary to deal with the potential impacts of these changes that are already happening.	
	4.10.3	To support planning decisions, the government produces a set of UK Climate Projections as well as hazard-specific tools and guidance like the Environment Agency's climate change allowances for flood risk assessments. In addition, the government's National Adaptation Programme and Adaptation Reporting Power will ensure that reporting authorities (a defined list of public bodies and statutory undertakers, including energy utilities) assess the risks to their organisation presented by climate change.	
	4.10.4	The generic impacts advice in this NPS and the technology specific advice on impacts in the other energy NPSs provide additional information on climate change adaptation and should be read alongside this section (Section 5.3 on greenhouse gas emissions, Section 5.6 on coastal change and Section 5.8 on flood risk in particular provide relevant guidance for consideration).	
Applicant's Assessment	4.10.5	In certain circumstances, measures implemented to ensure a scheme can adapt to climate change may give rise to additional impacts, for example as a result of protecting against flood risk, there may be consequential impacts on coastal change. In preparing measures to support climate change adaptation applicants should take reasonable steps to maximise the use of nature-based solutions alongside other conventional techniques.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and its supporting appendices provide an assessment of the Scheme in the context of climate change resilience and its potential greenhouse gas emissions. Consideration has been given to the use of nature-based solutions, and a number of measures are proposed in connection with the Scheme including, the introduction of buffers around watercourses, planting that benefits both flood and surface water management as well as an increases in BNG, the location of built infrastructure outside of flood zones 2 and 3. In addition, proposals for SuDS have also
	4.10.6	Integrated approaches, such as looking across the water cycle, considering coordinated management of water storage, supply, demand, wastewater, and flood risk can provide	

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		further benefits to address multiple infrastructure needs, as well as carbon sequestration benefits.	been incorporated within the surface water drainage strategy and **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]**.
	4.10.7	In addition to avoiding further GHG emissions when compared with more traditional adaptation approaches, nature-based solutions can also result in biodiversity benefits and net gain, as well as increasing absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.	
	4.10.8	New energy infrastructure will typically need to remain operational over many decades, in the face of a changing climate. Consequently, applicants must consider the direct (e.g. site flooding, limited water availability, storms, heatwave and wildfire threats to infrastructure and operations) and indirect (e.g. access roads or other critical dependencies impacted by flooding, storms, heatwaves or wildfires) impacts of climate change when planning the location, design, build, operation and, where appropriate, decommissioning of new energy infrastructure.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** includes a climate resilience assessment at **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-3: Climate Resilience Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** that has considered the full lifetime of the Scheme. This assessment includes forecast changes to the UK climate over the lifetime of the project. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents a Flood Risk Assessment for the Scheme which includes flood modelling that accounts for likely future changes in climate. The assessments confirm the Scheme has been designed to be resilient to climate change.
	4.10.9	The ES should set out how the proposal will take account of the projected impacts of climate change, using government guidance and industry standard benchmarks such as the Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessments, Climate Impacts Tool, and British Standards for climate change adaptation, in accordance with the EIA Regulations.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the Scheme in the context of climate change resilience and its potential greenhouse gas emissions. This has used government guidance and industry standard benchmarks in accordance with the EIA Regulations. This includes the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) guidance on Assessing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions and Evaluating their Significance and Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-2: Climate Baseline [EN010141/DR/6.2]** has conservatively used Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5 (RCP8.5) for 2060-2079. RCP8.5 is a high GHG emissions scenario used in climate modelling to represent a future with continued, intensive fossil fuel use and limited climate policy. The resilience of the Scheme to climate change has been assessed in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-3: Climate Resilience Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The assessment concludes that the Scheme would deliver significant beneficial effects through a reduction in atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions from the generation of renewable electricity, which would reduce fossil fuel generation from other sources within the grid.
	4.10.10	Applicants should assess the impacts on and from their proposed energy project across a range of climate change scenarios, in line with appropriate expert advice and guidance available at the time.	
	4.10.11	Applicants should demonstrate that proposals have a high level of climate resilience built-in from the outset and should also demonstrate how proposals can be adapted over their predicted lifetimes to remain resilient to a credible maximum climate change scenario. These results should be considered alongside relevant research which is based on the climate change projections.	
	4.10.12	Where energy infrastructure has safety critical elements, the applicant should apply a credible maximum climate change scenario. It is appropriate to take a risk-averse approach with elements of infrastructure which are critical to the safety of its operation.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	4.10.13	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that applicants for new energy infrastructure have taken into account the potential impacts of climate change using the latest UK Climate Projections and associated research and expert guidance (such as the EA's Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessments or the Welsh Government's Climate change allowances and flood consequence assessments) available at the time the ES was prepared to ensure they have identified appropriate mitigation or adaptation measures. This should cover the estimated lifetime of the new infrastructure, including any decommissioning period.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated appendices provides an assessment of the Scheme in the context of climate change resilience and its potential greenhouse gas emissions which covers its construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The future baseline has been calculated by the Applicant using the latest UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18) projections.

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	4.10.14	Should a new set of UK Climate Projections or associated research become available after the preparation of the ES, the Secretary of State (or the Examining Authority during the examination stage) should consider whether they need to request further information from the applicant.	As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has consulted with the EA who have provided advice regarding the climate change allowances that should be used for flood modelling. The Applicant has taken the EA's advice on climate change allowances and data on future climate projections into account in the preparation of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and associated appendices. The **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]**, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]**, and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** set out measures that will be adopted for climate resilience through the various phases of project delivery. As set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**, the Scheme has been designed mindful and cognisant of a changing climate and assessed accordingly. Any further adaption measures for the project would not be likely to give rise to any consequential impacts. The climate change assessment (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]**) considers the resilience of the Scheme to the projected changes in climate, measures taken to mitigate the impacts, and the impact of the Scheme on climate change. It concludes that the Scheme is resilient to the effects of climate change and no additional mitigation measures are recommended. On the other matters it concludes that the Scheme would have a significant beneficial effect on climate change. This is because the Scheme's net GHG impacts are below zero as it causes a reduction in atmospheric GHG concentration indirectly through offsetting other more carbon intensive methods of electricity generation. Additionally, the Scheme substantially exceeds net zero requirements.
	4.10.15	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that there are not features of the design of new energy infrastructure critical to its operation which may be seriously affected by more radical changes to the climate beyond that projected in the latest set of UK climate projections, taking account of the latest credible scientific evidence on, for example, sea level rise (for example by referring to additional maximum credible scenarios – i.e. from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change or EA) and that necessary action can be taken to ensure the operation of the infrastructure over its estimated lifetime.	
	4.10.16	If any adaptation measures give rise to consequential impacts (for example on flooding, water resources or coastal change) the Secretary of State should consider the impact of the latter in relation to the application as a whole and the impacts guidance set out in Part 5 of this NPS.	
	4.10.17	Any adaptation measures should be based on the latest set of UK Climate Projections, the government's latest UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, when available, and in consultation with the EA's Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Assessments or the Welsh Government's Climate change allowances and flood consequence assessments.	
	4.10.18	The Secretary of State may take into account reporting authorities' reports (see paragraph 4.10.3 above) to the Secretary of State when considering adaptation measures proposed by an applicant for new energy infrastructure.	
	4.10.19	Adaptation measures should be required to be implemented at the time of construction where necessary and appropriate to do so. However, where they are necessary to deal with the impact of climate change, and that measure would have an adverse effect on other aspects of the project and/or surrounding environment (for example coastal processes), the Secretary of State may consider requiring the applicant to keep the need for the adaptation measure under review, and ensure that the measure could be implemented should the need arise, rather than at the outset of the development (for example increasing height of existing, or requiring new, sea walls).	
Network Connection			
Network connection	4.11.1	The connection of a proposed electricity generation plant to the electricity network is an important consideration for applicants wanting to construct or extend a generation plant.	The Applicant has secured a grid connection at the Eaton Socon Substation to the west of St Neots, under the terms of a grid connection agreement with National Grid. The Scheme would be connected to the transmission network. Details of the grid connection are set out in the **Grid Connection Statement [EN010141/DR/7.18]**.
	4.11.2	In the market system and in the past, it has been for the applicant to ensure that there will be necessary infrastructure and capacity within an existing or planned transmission or distribution network to accommodate the electricity generated.	

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	4.11.4	Transmission network infrastructure, and related network reinforcement and upgrade works, associated with nationally significant low carbon infrastructure is considered as CNP Infrastructure. Further guidance can be found in Section 4.2 of this NPS and EN-5.	There would not be a requirement to upgrade the transmission network or provide other off-site network reinforcement as a result of the Scheme. There would be minor works to the Eaton Socon Substation to facilitate the connection under the terms of a grid connection agreement with National Grid, as set out under Work No. 5 within Schedule 1 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** and explained within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
Applicant's Assessment	4.11.5	The applicant must liaise with National Grid who own and manage the transmission network in England and Wales or the relevant regional DNO or TSO to secure a grid connection.	The Applicant has secured a grid connection at the Eaton Socon Substation to the west of St Neots. The Scheme would be connected to the transmission network. Details of the grid connection are set out in the **Grid Connection Statement [EN010141/DR/7.18]**.
	4.11.6	Applicants may wish to take a commercial risk where they have not received or accepted a formal offer of a grid connection from the relevant network operator at the time of the application. In this situation applicants should provide information as part of their application confirming that there is no obvious reason why a network connection would not be possible.	
	4.11.7	The Planning Act 2008 aims to create a holistic planning regime so that the cumulative effect of different elements of the same project can be considered together. Co-ordinated applications typically bring economic efficiencies and reduced environmental impact. The government therefore envisages that wherever reasonably possible, applications for new generating stations and related infrastructure should be contained in a single application to the Secretary of State or in separate applications submitted in tandem which have been prepared in an integrated way, as outlined in EN-5. This is particularly encouraged to ensure development of more co-ordinated transmission overall.	The DCO Application includes all infrastructure necessary to deliver and operate the Scheme, this is set out in more detail in Chapter 2 of the Es which describes the proposed Works. .
	4.11.8	On some occasions it may not be possible to coordinate applications. For example, different elements of a project may have different lead-in times and be undertaken by different legal entities subject to different commercial and regulatory frameworks (for example grid companies operate within OFGEM controls) making it inefficient from a delivery perspective to submit one application. Applicants may therefore decide to submit separate applications for each element. Where this is the case, the applicant should include information on the other elements and explain the reasons for the separate application confirming that there are no obvious reasons for why other elements are likely to be refused.	
	4.11.9	If this option is pursued, the applicant accepts the implicit risks involved in doing so and must ensure they provide sufficient information to comply with the EIA Regulations including the indirect, secondary, and cumulative effects, which will encompass information on grid connections.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	4.11.11	The Secretary of State should consider guidance contained within EN-5.	Details of the arrangements for the grid connection are set out in the **Grid Connection Statement [EN010141/DR/7.18]**.

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	4.11.12	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that appropriate network connection arrangements are/will be in place for a given project regardless of whether one or multiple (linked) applications are submitted.	The relevant policies of EN-5 are taken into consideration in Table 3 below.
	4.11.13	Where the Secretary of State has decided to grant consent for one project this should not in any way fetter the Secretary of State's ability to take subsequent decisions on any related projects.	
Pollution Control and Other Environmental Regulatory Regimes			
Pollution control and other environmental regulatory regimes	4.12.1	Issues relating to discharges or emissions from a proposed project, and which lead to other direct or indirect impacts on terrestrial, freshwater, marine, onshore, and offshore environments, or which include noise and vibration may be subject to separate regulation under the pollution control framework or other consenting and licensing regimes, for example local planning consent or marine licences (see paragraph 4.5.6 for more information).	The Applicant has prepared an **Other Consents and Licences Statement [EN010141/DR/5.5]** that identifies any other consents and licences that would be required to construct or operate the Scheme. An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate any potential direct or indirect impacts from pollution during the construction phase. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively.
	4.12.2	The planning and pollution control systems are separate but complementary. The planning system controls the development and use of land in the public interest. It plays a key role in protecting and improving the natural environment, public health and safety, and amenity, for example by attaching conditions to allow developments which would otherwise not be environmentally acceptable to proceed and preventing harmful development which cannot be made acceptable even through conditions. Pollution control is concerned with preventing pollution through the use of measures to prohibit or limit the releases of substances to the environment from different sources to the lowest practicable level. It also ensures that ambient air, water, and land quality meet standards that guard against impacts to the environment or human health.	
Applicant's Assessment	4.12.6	Many projects covered by this NPS will be subject to the Environmental Permitting Regulations, which also incorporates operational waste management requirements for certain activities. When an applicant applies for an Environmental Permit, the relevant regulator (usually the EA or NRW but sometimes the local authority) requires that the application demonstrates that processes are in place to meet all relevant Environmental Permitting Regulations requirements.	The Applicant has prepared an **Other Consents and Licences Statement [EN010141/DR/5.5]** that identifies any other consents and licences that would be required to construct or operate the Scheme. The Applicant has carried out early engagement with the relevent regulators and, in particular, Historic England (HE) and the EA. The status of the other consents and licenses that are to be encapsulated within the DCO are summarised in the **Other Consents and Licences Statement [EN010141/DR/5.5]**
	4.12.7	Applicants should make early contact with relevant regulators, including EA or NRW and the MMO, to discuss their requirements for Environmental Permits and other consents, such as marine licences.	
	4.12.8	Wherever possible, applicants should submit applications for Environmental Permits and other necessary consents at the same time as applying to the Secretary of State for development consent.	

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Secretary of State Decision Making	4.12.9	In considering an application for development consent the Secretary of State should focus on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land or sea, and the impact of that use, rather than the control of processes, emissions or discharges themselves.	The Applicant has prepared an **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** that reports an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme. **ES Vol 1 Main Report [EN010141/DR/6.1]** is accompanied by **ES Vol 2 Technical Appendices [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 3 Figures [EN010141/DR/6.3]**. In addition, the **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment [EN010141/DR/5.7]** provides evidence to demonstrate that the Scheme will not have likely significant adverse effects on internationally designated sites. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and its supporting appendices, and the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.8]*** provide evidence to justify the site selection, and the design process taken to mitigate the potential impacts of the Scheme. The above documents demonstrate that the Scheme is an acceptable use of the land in question. The Environmental Statement has assessed and taken full account of the environmental impacts of the project. An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate any potential direct or indirect impacts from pollution during the construction phase. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively. The Applicant has prepared an **Other Consents and Licences Statement [EN010141/DR/5.5]** that identifies any other consents and licences that would be required to operate the Scheme.
	4.12.10	The Secretary of State should work on the assumption that the relevant pollution control regime and other environmental regulatory regimes, including those on land drainage, water abstraction and biodiversity, will be properly applied and enforced by the relevant regulator. The Secretary of State should act to complement but not seek to duplicate them.	
	4.12.13	In considering the impacts of the project, the Secretary of State may wish to consult the regulator on any management plans that would be included in an Environmental Permit application.	
	4.12.14	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that development consent can be granted taking full account of environmental impacts.	
	4.12.15	Working in close cooperation with the EA or NRW and/or the pollution control authority, and other relevant bodies, such as the MMO, the SNCB, Drainage Boards, and water and sewerage undertakers, the Secretary of State should be satisfied, before consenting any potentially polluting developments, that: • the relevant pollution control authority is satisfied that potential releases can be adequately regulated under the pollution control framework; and • the effects of existing sources of pollution in and around the site are not such that the cumulative effects of pollution when the proposed development is added would make that development unacceptable, particularly in relation to statutory environmental quality limits.	
	4.12.16	The Secretary of State should not refuse consent on the basis of pollution impacts unless there is good reason to believe that any relevant necessary operational pollution control permits or licences or other consents will not subsequently be granted. On this basis, it is reasonable for the Secretary of State to consider residual amenity issues only when considering whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land or sea, and on the impacts of that use.	
Safety			
Safety	4.13.1	In addition to its role in the planning system, the HSE is the independent regulator for workplace health and safety and is responsible for enforcing a range of health and safety legislation, some of which is relevant to the construction, operation and decommissioning of energy infrastructure.	The Applicant consulted the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the UK Health Security Agency as part of their Section 42 Consultation. As reported in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the HSE and the UK Health Security Agency provided a written response to the consultation which has been taken into account in the preparation of this application for development consent.

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	4.13.2	Some technologies, for example major accident hazard pipelines, will be regulated by specific health and safety legislation. The application of these regulations is set out in the technology specific NPSs where relevant.	No concerns have been raised in relation to the COMAH Regulations. The Scheme would not be within the scope of the COMAH Regulations. The Applicant has also consulted with the relevent fire authorities and relevent safety / management guidance. This has informed preparation of the **outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.10]**, which sets out the measures to mitigate and manage the risks associated with the BESS.
	4.13.3	Some energy infrastructure will be subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 2015. These Regulations aim to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and limit the consequences to people and the environment of any that do occur. COMAH regulations apply throughout the life cycle of the facility, i.e. from the design and build stage through to decommissioning. They are enforced by the Competent Authority comprising HSE or ONR (Office for Nuclear Regulation, for nuclear) and the EA acting jointly in England and by the HSE and NRW acting jointly in Wales, and the HSE and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) acting jointly in Scotland.	
	4.13.4	The same principles apply here as for those set out in the previous section on pollution control and other environmental permitting regimes.	
Applicant Assessment	4.13.5	Applicants should consult with the HSE on matters relating to safety.	
	4.13.6	Applicants seeking to develop infrastructure subject to the COMAH regulations should make early contact with the Competent Authority.	
	4.13.7	If a safety report is required it is important to discuss with the Competent Authority the type of information that should be provided at the design and development stage, and what form this should take. This will enable the Competent Authority to review as much information as possible before construction begins, in order to assess whether the inherent features of the design are sufficient to prevent, control and mitigate major accidents.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	4.13.8	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that a safety assessment has been prepared, where required, and that the Competent Authority has raised no safety objections.	
Hazardous Substances			
Hazardous substances	4.14.1	All establishments wishing to hold stocks of certain hazardous substances above a threshold need 'Hazardous Substances Consent.'	The Scheme does not currently fall within the scope of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015 and as such Hazardous Substances Consent is not required.
Common Law Nuisance and Statutory Nuisance			
Common law nuisance and statutory nuisance	4.15.5	At the application stage of an energy NSIP, possible sources of nuisance under section 79(1) of the EPA 1990 and how they may be mitigated or limited should be identified by the applicant so that appropriate requirements can be included in any subsequent order granting development consent (see Section 5.7 on dust, odour, artificial light etc. and Section 5.12 on noise and vibration).	The Applicant has prepared a **Statutory Nuisance Statement [EN010141/DR/7.19]** which sets out the potential sources of nuisance as defined under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Statutory Nuisance Statement concludes that there would not be any sources of statutory nuisance resulting from the Scheme.

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Security Considerations			
Security considerations	4.16.1	National security considerations apply across all national infrastructure sectors.	The Applicant is not aware of any national security considerations relating specifically to the Scheme.
	4.16.4	Government policy is to ensure that, where possible, proportionate protective security measures are designed into new infrastructure projects at an early stage in the project development. Where applications for development consent for infrastructure covered by this NPS relate to potentially 'critical' infrastructure, there may be national security considerations.	
Section 5: Generic Impacts			
Air Quality and Emissions			
Air quality and emissions	5.2.1	Energy infrastructure development can have adverse effects on air quality. The construction, operation and decommissioning phases can involve emissions to air which could lead to adverse impacts on health, on protected species and habitats, or on the wider countryside and species. Air emissions include particulate matter (for example dust) up to a diameter of ten microns (PM10) and up to a diameter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5) as well as gases such as sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides (NOx).	Once operational, the Scheme would not directly give rise to air emissions as a result of regular operations. There would potentially be air quality impacts as a result of dust during the construction phase, and in that regard the Applicant has prepared ***ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-2: Construction Dust Assessment*** **[EN010141/DR/6.2]** which confirms that the Scheme would have no significant adverse effect or other unacceptable impact on any sensitive receptors. The **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** also sets out how dust and any other aerial emissions would be controlled to mitigate any potentially significant effects. Since the Scheme would not significantly affect air quality and emissions, a detailed assessment of effects was scoped out of the ES, as agreed by the Planning Inspectorate in the adopted **ES Vol 2 Appendix 1-2 EIA Scoping Opinion [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The scope of the ES was refined through pre-application engagement with the local planning authorities, statutory environmental bodies, and other stakeholders as reported in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. There has been no reason to scope an assessment of air quality and emissions back into the ES as a result of the consultation responses.
	5.2.2	Legal limits for pollutants in ambient air are set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 and for England, national objectives set out in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 reiterated in the Air Quality Strategy, or for Wales, the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000 and the Clean Air Plan for Wales.171 In addition, two fine particulate matter (PM2.5) targets were set under the Environment Act 2021 for England – an annual mean concentration target and a population exposure target. Internationally agreed emissions commitments are set in the National Emission Ceilings Regulations 2018 and establish limits for total UK emissions of key pollutants.	
	5.2.3	For many air pollutants there is not a threshold below which there is no health impact so it is important that energy infrastructure schemes consider not just how a scheme may impact statutory air quality limits, objectives or targets but also measures to mitigate all emissions in order to minimise human exposure to air pollution, especially for those who are more susceptible to the impacts of poor air quality.	
	5.2.7	Proximity to emission sources can have significant impacts on sensitive receptor sites for air quality, such as education or healthcare sites, residential use or sensitive or protected ecosystems. Projects near a sensitive receptor site for air quality should only be proposed in exceptional circumstances if no viable alternative site is available. In these instances, substantial mitigation of any expected emissions will be required (see paragraph 5.2.12 below).	

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Applicant's Assessment	5.2.8	Where the project is likely to have adverse effects on air quality the applicant should undertake an assessment of the impacts of the proposed project as part of the ES.	The Scheme would not result in significant adverse effects on air quality, and therefore an assessment of operational phase air quality impacts was scoped out of the ES, as agreed by the Planning Inspectorate in the adopted **ES Vol 2 Appendix 1-2 EIA Scoping Opinion [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. There would potentially be air quality impacts as a result of dust and emissions from vehicle / plant movements during the construction phase. The Applicant has prepared ***ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-2: Construction Dust Assessment*** **[EN010141/DR/6.2]** which confirms that the Scheme will have no significant adverse impact or other unacceptable impact on any sensitive receptors. Similarly, **ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Air Quality [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes there would be no significant adverse effects as a result of vehicle / plant movements during the construction phase. The **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** sets out how dust would be controlled to mitigate any potential effects and the **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]** sets out how traffic movements would be controlled and regulated,
	5.2.9	The ES should describe: • existing air quality concentrations and the relative change in air quality from existing levels; • any significant air quality effects, mitigation action taken and any residual effects, distinguishing between the project stages and taking account of any significant emissions from any road traffic generated by the project; and • the predicted absolute emissions, concentration change and absolute concentrations as a result of the proposed project, after mitigation methods have been applied; and • any potential eutrophication impacts.	
	5.2.10	In addition, applicants should consider the Environment Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2022 and associated Defra guidance.	
	5.2.11	Defra publishes future national projections of air quality based on estimates of future levels of emissions, traffic, and vehicle fleet. Projections are updated as the evidence base changes and the applicant should ensure these are current at the point of an application. The applicant's assessment should be consistent with this but may include more detailed modelling and evaluation to demonstrate local and national impacts. If an applicant believes they have robust additional supporting evidence, to the extent they could affect the conclusions of the assessment, they should include this in their representations to the Examining Authority along with the source.	
	5.2.12	Where a proposed development is likely to lead to a breach of any relevant statutory air quality limits, objectives or targets, or affect the ability of a non-compliant area to achieve compliance within the timescales set out in the most recent relevant air quality plan/strategy at the time of the decision, the applicant should work with the relevant authorities to secure appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that those statutory limits, objectives or targets are not breached.	The Scheme will not result in a breach of any relevant air quality limits, objectives or targets.
	5.2.13	The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed both for operational and construction emissions over and above any which may form part of the project application. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at this stage. In doing so the Secretary of State should have regard to the Air Quality Strategy in England, or the Clean Air Plan for Wales in Wales, or any successors to these and should consider relevant advice within Local Air Quality Management guidance and PM2.5 targets guidance.	There would potentially be air quality impacts as a result of dust and emissions from vehicle / plant movements during the construction phase. The Applicant has prepared ***ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-2: Construction Dust Assessment*** **[EN010141/DR/6.2]** which confirms that the Scheme will have no significant adverse impact or other unacceptable impact on any sensitive receptors. Similarly, **ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Air Quality [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes there would be no significant adverse effects as a result of vehicle / plant movements during the construction phase.
	5.2.14	The mitigations identified in Section 5.14 on traffic and transport impacts will help mitigate the effects of air emissions from transport.	This is noted and the Scheme is considered against the relevant paragraphs of NPS EN-1 Section 5.14 later in this table.

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Secretary of State Decision Making	5.2.15	Many activities involving air emissions are subject to pollution control. The considerations set out in Section 4.12 on the interface between planning and pollution control therefore apply. The Secretary of State must also consider duties under other legislation including duties under the Environment Act 2021 in relation to environmental targets and have regard to policies set out in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.	An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate any potential direct or indirect impacts from pollution during the construction phase. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively.
	5.2.16	The Secretary of State should give air quality considerations substantial weight where a project would lead to a deterioration in air quality. This could for example include where an area breaches any national air quality limits or statutory air quality objectives. However, air quality considerations will also be important where substantial changes in air quality levels are expected, even if this does not lead to any breaches of statutory limits, objectives or targets.	The Scheme would not result in any likely significant effects on air quality either directly or indirectly for any receptor, including sensitive receptor sites. The Applicant has prepared the **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment *[EN010141/DR/5.3]*** that considers the potential impacts on the internationally designated sites of the Mersey Estuary, including effects arising from air quality impacts. The HRA concludes that with the adopted mitigation measures there would be no significant effect on internationally designated sites.
	5.2.17	The Secretary of State should give air quality considerations substantial weight where a project is proposed near a sensitive receptor site, such as an education or healthcare facility, residential use or a sensitive or protected habitat.	
	5.2.18	Where a project is proposed near to a sensitive receptor site for air quality, if the applicant cannot provide justification for this location, and a suitable mitigation plan, the Secretary of State should refuse consent.	
	5.2.19	In all cases, the Secretary of State must take account of any relevant statutory air quality limits, objectives and targets. If a project will lead to non-compliance with a statutory limit, objective or target the Secretary of State should refuse consent.	
Greenhouse Gas Emissions			
Greenhouse gas emissions	5.3.1	Significant levels of energy infrastructure development are vital to ensure the decarbonisation of the UK economy. The construction, operation and decommissioning of that energy infrastructure will in itself, lead to GHG emissions.	An assessment of the whole-life GHG emissions from the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Scheme is reported in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-1: Greenhouse Gas Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the measures set out paragraph 5.3.4 of EN-1.
Applicant's Assessment	5.3.4	All proposals for energy infrastructure projects should include a GHG assessment as part of their ES (See Section 4.3). This should include: • A whole life GHG assessment showing construction, operational and decommissioning GHG impacts, including impacts from change of land use; • An explanation of the steps that have been taken to drive down the climate change impacts at each of those stages; • Measurement of embodied GHG impact from the construction stage; • How reduction in energy demand and consumption during operation has been prioritised in comparison with other measures;	

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		• How operational emissions have been reduced as much as possible through the application of best available techniques for that type of technology; • Calculation of operational energy consumption and associated carbon emissions; • Whether and how any residual GHG emissions will be (voluntarily) offset or removed using a recognised framework; and • Where there are residual emissions, the level of emissions and the impact of those on national and international efforts to limit climate change, both alone and where relevant in combination with other developments at a regional or national level, or sector level, if sectoral targets are developed.	
Mitigation	5.3.5	A GHG assessment should be used to drive down GHG emissions at every stage of the proposed development and ensure that emissions are minimised as far as possible for the type of technology, taking into account the overall objectives of ensuring our supply of energy always remains secure, reliable and affordable, as we transition to net zero.	An assessment of the whole-life GHG emissions from the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Scheme is reported in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated appendices **[EN010141/DR/6.2]** . The Applicant has identified mitigation measures to reduce the GHG emissions at all stages of the project, and these are set out within Section 5.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and secured by the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. As set out in the **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** and the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17],** the Scheme would result in a considerable net gain in biodiversity which includes woodland creation, hedgerow creation and restoration. This would make a beneficial and natural contribution to increased carbon capture across the Site. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme would result in a significant beneficial effect on atmospheric GHG emissions, and therefore a specific GHG Reduction Strategy has not been prepared as part of this application for development consent.
	5.3.6	Applicants should look for opportunities within the proposed development to embed nature-based or technological solutions to mitigate or offset the emissions of construction and decommissioning.	
	5.3.7	Steps taken to minimise and offset emissions should be set out in a GHG Reduction Strategy, secured under the Development Consent Order. The GHG Reduction Strategy should consider the creation and preservation of carbon stores and sinks including through woodland creation, hedgerow creation and restoration, peatland restoration and through other natural habitats.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.3.8	The Secretary of State must be satisfied that the applicant has as far as possible assessed the GHG emissions of all stages of the development.	An assessment of the whole-life GHG emissions from the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Scheme is reported in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated appendices **[EN010141/DR/6.2]** . The Applicant has identified mitigation measures to reduce the GHG emissions at all stages of the project, and these are set out within Section 5.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and secured by the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. As set out in the **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** and the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17],** the Scheme would result in a considerable net gain in biodiversity which includes woodland creation, hedgerow creation and restoration. This would make a beneficial and natural contribution to increased carbon capture across the Site. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme would result in a significant beneficial effect on atmospheric GHG emissions, and therefore a specific GHG Reduction Strategy has not been prepared as part of this application for development consent. The significant beneficial effect on atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions is a key benefit of the project, which should be afforded significant positive weight by the Secretary of State.
	5.3.9	The Secretary of State should be content that the applicant has taken all reasonable steps to reduce the GHG emissions of the construction and decommissioning stage of the development.	
	5.3.10	The Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to projects that embed nature-based or technological processes to mitigate or offset the emissions of construction and decommissioning within the proposed development. However, in light of the vital role energy infrastructure plays in the process of economy wide decarbonisation, the Secretary of State must accept that there are likely to be some residual emissions from construction and decommissioning of energy infrastructure.	

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Biodiversity and Geological Conservation			
Habitats Regulations	5.4.4	The highest level of biodiversity protection is afforded to sites identified through international conventions. The Habitats Regulations set out sites for which an HRA will assess the implications of a plan or project, including Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.	The Applicant has prepared the **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment *[EN010141/DR/5.7]*** as part of the application to specifically assess the potential impacts of the Scheme on internationally designated sites, specifically the Eversen and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is the only internationally designated site within the 30km search area. There are also no potential Special Protection Areas (SPAs) / possible SACs or proposed Ramsar Sites within the same area of search. The scope and approach to the HRA has been discussed with Natural England as part of the pre-application consultation, as set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1].** The Applicant is also proposing to engage with Natural England on the production of a Statement of Common Ground (SOCG). The HRA concludes that the Scheme would not result in likely significant adverse effects on internationally designated sites either in isolation, or cumulatively with other projects and Appropriate Assessment is not required.
	5.4.5	As a matter of policy, the following should be given the same protection as sites covered by the Habitats Regulations and an HRA will also be required: a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation; b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on any of the other sites covered by this paragraph.	
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	5.4.7	Many SSSIs are also designated as sites of international importance and will be protected accordingly. Those that are not, or those features of SSSIs not covered by an international designation, should be given a high degree of protection. Most National Nature Reserves are notified as SSSIs.	There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the order limits, the nearest SSSI to the Scheme is the Swineshead Wood SSSI, which is located approximately 900m to the north of the nearest order limit. This is confirmed in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Ecological Baseline Report [EN010141/DR/6.2].** An assessment of the effects of the Scheme on SSSIs is provided within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which concludes that the Scheme will not result in any significant residual adverse effects upon the Swineshead Wood SSSI or any other ecological receptors.
	5.4.8	Development on land within or outside a SSSI, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits (including need) of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSIs.	
Regional and Local Sites	5.4.12	Sites of regional and local biodiversity and geological interest, which include Regionally Important Geological Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites, are areas of substantive nature conservation value and make an important contribution to ecological networks and nature's recovery. They can also provide wider benefits including public access (where agreed), climate mitigation and helping to tackle air pollution.	There are no Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within the order limits. The nearest LWS to the Scheme is Little Paxton Pits LNR which is located 3.11km north-east of the nearest order limits. There are also no-non statutory designated sites for nature conservation within the order limits. However, there are two County Wildlife Site (CWS) (Huntingdon Wood CWS and Kangaroo Meadow CWS) located adjacent to the Site boundary. This is confirmed in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Ecological Baseline Report [EN010141/DR/6.2].** An assessment of the effects of the Scheme on SSSIs is provided within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which concludes that the Scheme will not result in any significant residual adverse effects upon the CWS.
	5.4.13	National planning policy expects plans to identify and map Local Wildlife Sites, and to include policies that not only secure their protection from harm or loss but also help to enhance them and their connection to wider ecological networks.	
Ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats	5.4.14	Irreplaceable habitats are habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity.	Information on the ecological baseline within the order limits is provided in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Ecological Baseline Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and has been informed by an extended Phase 1 habitat survey across and arboriculture assessment **ES Vol 2 Appendix 2-2: Arboriculture Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The surveys have not identified any ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats within the order limits.
	5.4.15	Ancient woodland is a valuable biodiversity resource both for its diversity of species and for its longevity as woodland. Keepers of Time, the government's policy for ancient and native trees and woodlands in England sets out the government's commitment to maintain	

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		and enhance the existing area of ancient woodland, maintain and enhance the existing resource of known ancient and veteran trees, excluding natural losses from disease and death, and to increase the percentage of ancient woodland in active management. Ancient and veteran trees found outside ancient woodland are also particularly valuable. Other types of irreplaceable habitats include blanket bog, limestone pavement, coastal sand dunes, spartina salt marsh swards, mediterranean saltmarsh scrub, and lowland fen.	The closest ancient woodland is Huntingdon Wood, which is directly adjacent to the grid connection element of the Scheme Boundary. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that, following the implementation of embedded best practice mitigation and avoidance measures during the construction of the Scheme, it would have a neutral effect on Huntingdon Woods CWS and the Ancient Woodland contained therein.
Protection and enhancement of habitats and species	5.4.16	Many individual species receive statutory protection under a range of legislative provisions. Other species and habitats have been identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales, as well as for their continued benefit for climate mitigation and adaptation and thereby requiring conservation action.	The Applicant has undertaken comprehensive ecological surveys across the Order limits to identify ecological species and habitats that could be impacted by the Scheme. The ecological baseline of the site is set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated appendices, particularly **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Ecological Baseline Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** draws the following overall conclusions regarding the residual effects of the Scheme on habitats and species**.** • The Scheme will not result in **any** significant residual adverse effects upon ecological receptors. • During the construction phase the Scheme would result in short term and temporary minor adverse effects on ground nesting birds, the wider breeding bird assemblage, amphibians (including great crested newt) and otter. These effects would not be significant in EIA terms. • During the operational phase the Scheme will result in a **significant beneficial effect** on priority habitats, other breeding birds and on foraging and commuting bats and will result in beneficial (not significant) effects for other ecological receptors.
Applicant's Assessment	5.4.17	Where the development is subject to EIA, the applicant should ensure that the ES clearly sets out any effects on internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites of ecological or geological conservation importance (including those outside England), on protected species and on habitats and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, including irreplaceable habitats.	The Applicant has prepared an assessment of impacts to ecological and nature conservation receptors within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** The assessment of likely impacts and effects is specifically contained within Section 7.8 and the residual effects are reported within Section 7.10. In summary, the Scheme would not result in any significant residual adverse effects upon ecological receptors. During the Construction Phase the Scheme would result in short term and temporary minor adverse effects on ground nesting birds, the wider breeding bird assemblage, amphibians (including great crested newt) and otter. These effects would not be significant in EIA terms. However, during the Operational Phase the Scheme will result in a significant beneficial effect on priority habitats and on foraging and commuting bats. It would also result in beneficial (not significant) effects for other ecological receptors.
	5.4.18	The applicant should provide environmental information proportionate to the infrastructure where EIA is not required to help the Secretary of State consider thoroughly the potential effects of a proposed project.	
	5.4.19	The applicant should show how the project has taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests.	The Applicant has taken an environmentally led approach to the masterplanning of the Scheme from the inception of the project, as reported in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.8]***. This has included identifying from the outset the specific constraints of the Site, the condition and type of habitats present, and the species that these habitats support, or could support. By retaining existing habitats and supplementing them with complimentary habitats the Scheme has taken a holistic approach to ecosystem enhancement and habitat connectivity. The result of the Applicant's approach
	5.4.20	Applicants should consider wider ecosystem services and benefits of natural capital when designing enhancement measures.	

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	5.4.21	As set out in Section 4.7, the design process should embed opportunities for nature inclusive design. Energy infrastructure projects have the potential to deliver significant benefits and enhancements beyond Biodiversity Net Gain, which result in wider environmental gains (see Section 4.6 on Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain). The scope of potential gains will be dependent on the type, scale, and location of each project.	is that the Scheme is achieving gains in habitats, complimented by further landscape enhancements such as enhanced recreational access to deliver wider environmental benefits. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** throughout its operation the Scheme would result in a significant beneficial effect on priority habitats, due to extensive creation of hedgerow as part of the landscape proposals. It would also result in a significant beneficial effect on foraging and commuting bats due to the provision of high-quality habitats as part of the landscape proposals. During its operation the Scheme, would also result in non-significant beneficial effects to on-site habitats; breeding bird assemblage; roosting bats; amphibians; reptiles; and other notable species (including flora, invertebrates, mammals and fish). The benefits would be realised for the duration of the Scheme's operational lifespan.
	5.4.22	The design of energy NSIP proposals will need to consider the movement of mobile/migratory species such as birds, fish and marine and terrestrial mammals and their potential to interact with infrastructure. As energy infrastructure could occur anywhere within England and Wales, both inland and onshore and offshore, the potential to affect mobile and migratory species across the UK and more widely across Europe (transboundary effects) requires consideration, depending on the location of development.	The Applicant has undertaken comprehensive ecological surveys across the Order limits to identify ecological species that could be impacted by the Scheme. The ecological baseline of the Site is set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Ecological Baseline Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. For mobile and migratory species such as birds this has included survey effort across seasons and over multiple years in accordance with published best practice guidance. See **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-2: Breeding Bird Survey Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Wintering Bird Survey Report [EN010141/DR/6.2].**
Applicant's Assessment – Habitats Regulations	5.4.25	The applicant should seek the advice of the appropriate SNCB and provide the Secretary of State with such information as the Secretary of State may reasonably require, to determine whether an HRA Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required. Applicants can request and agree 'Evidence Plans' with SNCBs, which is a way to record upfront the information the applicant needs to supply with its application, so that the HRA can be efficiently carried out. If an AA is required, the applicant must provide the Secretary of State with such information as may reasonably be required to enable the Secretary of State to conduct the AA. This should include information on any mitigation measures that are proposed to minimise or avoid likely significant effects.	The Applicant has prepared the **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment *[EN010141/DR/5.7]*** which has been consulted on with Natural England as the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Body (SNCB), as set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated appendices, and the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment *[EN010141/DR/5.3]*** concludes that the Scheme would not result in likely significant adverse effects on internationally designated sites either in isolation, or cumulatively with other projects Therefore no appropriate assessment is required in relation to the Scheme.
	5.4.26	If, during the pre-application stage, the SNCB indicate that the proposed development is likely to adversely impact the integrity of habitat sites, the applicant must include with their application such information as may reasonably be required to assess a potential derogation under the Habitats Regulations.	As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. the Applicant has consulted Natural England throughout the pre-application stage. The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment *[EN010141/DR/5.3]*** concludes the Scheme would not result in likely significant adverse effects on European Sites and there is no need for an Appropriate Assessment. Therefore, a derogation under the Habitat Regulations is not required, and a case for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest is not required.
	5.4.27	If the SNCB gives such an indication at a later stage in the development consent process, the applicant must provide this information as soon as is reasonably possible and before the close of the examination. This information must include assessment of alternative solutions, a case for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and appropriate environmental compensation.	
	5.4.28	Provision of such information will not be taken as an acceptance of adverse impacts and if an applicant disputes the likelihood of adverse impacts, it can provide this information as part of its application 'without prejudice' to the Secretary of State's final decision on the	

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		impacts of the potential development. If, in these circumstances, an applicant does not supply information required for the assessment of a potential derogation, there will be no expectation that the Secretary of State will allow the applicant the opportunity to provide such information following the examination.	
	5.4.29	It is vital that applicants consider the need for compensation as early as possible in the design process as 'retrofitting' compensatory measures will introduce delays and uncertainty to the consenting process.	The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment** ***[EN010141/DR/5.7]*** concludes there will be no significant effects to European sites as a result of the Scheme, and therefore no compensation measures are required.
	5.4.30	Applicants should work closely at an early stage in the pre-application process with SNCB and Defra/Welsh Government to develop a compensation plan for all protected sites adversely affected by the development. Applicants should engage with the relevant Local Planning Authority at an early stage regarding the proposed location of compensatory measures. Applicants should also take account of any strategic plan level compensation plans in developing project level compensation plans.	
	5.4.31	Before submitting an application, applicants should seek the views of the SNCB and Defra/Welsh Government as to the suitability, securability and effectiveness of the compensation plan to ensure the development will not hinder the achievement of the conservation objectives for the protected site. In cases where such views are provided, the applicant should include a copy of this information with the compensation plan in their application for further consideration by the Examining Authority.	
Applicant's Assessment – Ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats	5.4.32	Applicants should include measures to mitigate fully the direct and indirect effects of development on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees or other irreplaceable habitats during both construction and operational phases.	Information on the ecological baseline within the order limits is provided in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Ecological Baseline Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and has been informed by an extended Phase 1 habitat survey across and arboriculture assessment **ES Vol 2 Appendix 2-2: Arboriculture Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The surveys have not identified any ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats within the order limits. The closest ancient woodland is Huntingdon Wood, which is located directly adjacent to the grid connection element of the Scheme Boundary. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that the implementation of embedded best practice mitigation and avoidance measures during the construction of the Scheme, it would have a no effect on Huntingdon Woods CWS and the Ancient Woodland contained therein.
Applicant's Assessment – Protection and enhancement of habitats and species	5.4.33	Applicants should consider any reasonable opportunities to maximise the restoration, creation, and enhancement of wider biodiversity, and the protection and restoration of the ability of habitats to store or sequester carbon as set out under Section 4.6.	The Applicant has taken an environmentally led approach to the masterplanning of the Scheme from the inception of the project, as reported in the **Design Approach Document** ***[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. This has included identifying from the outset the specific constraints of the Site, the condition and type of habitats present, and the species that these habitats support, or could support. By retaining existing habitats and supplementing them with complimentary habitats the Scheme has taken a holistic approach to ecosystem enhancement and habitat connectivity. The result of the Applicant's approach is that the Scheme would deliver significant BNG (**BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**), complimented by further landscape enhancements such as enhanced recreational access to deliver wider environmental benefits and an overall environmental net gain **(outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7])**.
	5.4.34	Consideration should be given to improvements to, and impacts on, habitats and species in, around and beyond developments, for wider ecosystem services and natural capital benefits, beyond those under protection and identified as being of principal importance. This may include considerations and opportunities identified through Local Nature	

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		Recovery Strategies, and national goals and targets set through the Environment Act 2021 and the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.	
Mitigation	5.4.35	Applicants should include appropriate avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures as an integral part of the proposed development. In particular, the applicant should demonstrate that: • during construction, they will seek to ensure that activities will be confined to the minimum areas required for the works; • the timing of construction has been planned to avoid or limit disturbance; • during construction and operation best practice will be followed to ensure that risk of disturbance or damage to species or habitats is minimised, including as a consequence of transport access arrangements; • habitats will, where practicable, be restored after construction works have finished; • opportunities will be taken to enhance existing habitats rather than replace them, and where practicable, create new habitats of value within the site landscaping proposals. Where habitat creation is required as mitigation, compensation, or enhancement, the location and quality will be of key importance. In this regard habitat creation should be focused on areas where the most ecological and ecosystems benefits can be realised; and • mitigations required as a result of legal protection of habitats or species will be complied with.	Specific ecological mitigation measures embedded into the Scheme are set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated appendices. Wider mitigation measures for the protection of ecology are set out within the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***, and the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. These mitigation measures include habitat avoidance, mitigation and creation; mitigation measures for protected species; and general mitigation measures to ensure compliance with environmental legislation.
	5.4.36	Applicants should produce and implement a Biodiversity Management Strategy as part of their development proposals. This could include provision for biodiversity awareness training to employees and contractors so as to avoid unnecessary adverse impacts on biodiversity during the construction and operation stages.	The **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***, and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** set out measures that will be adopted to manage biodiversity through the various phases of project delivery. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** that sets out how the ecological proposals will be managed post implementation.
	5.4.38	To further minimise any adverse impacts on geodiversity, where appropriate applicants are encouraged to produce and implement a Geodiversity Management Strategy to preserve and enhance access to geological interest features, as part of relevant development proposals.	The Scheme will not impact on features of geological interest, and therefore a mitigation strategy is not required.
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.4.39	The government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021 mark a step change in ambition for wildlife and the natural environment. The Secretary of State should have regard to the aims and goals of the government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, and in Wales the objectives of the Nature Recovery Plan, and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	The **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** including **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** have been prepared in accordance with all applicable statutory environmental legislation and government objectives.

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	5.4.41	The benefits of nationally significant low carbon energy infrastructure development may include benefits for biodiversity and geological conservation interests and these benefits may outweigh harm to these interests. The Secretary of State may take account of any such net benefit in cases where it can be demonstrated.	The Applicant's **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** provides a comprehensive summary of the benefits and harm caused by the Scheme, concluding that the Scheme would result in substantial benefits that weigh heavily in favour of the Scheme in the planning balance.
	5.4.42	As a general principle, and subject to the specific policies below, development should, in line with the mitigation hierarchy, aim to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, including through consideration of reasonable alternatives (as set out in Section 4.3 above). Where significant harm cannot be avoided, impacts should be mitigated and as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures should be sought.	As reported in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the Scheme would not result in any significant residual adverse effects upon ecological receptors. However, it would result in some temporary minor adverse (but not significant) effects on ground nesting birds, the wider breeding bird assemblage, amphibians (including great crested newt) and otter during the construction phase. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** confirms that the impacts cannot be avoided and proposes mitigation measures as far as reasonably practicable to reduce the effects. Compensation measures would not be suitable in relation to these effects. It must be recognised that in the longer-term, throughout the operational phase, the Scheme would result in significant beneficial residual effects on priority habitats and on foraging and commuting bats and will result in beneficial (not significant) effects for other ecological receptors, including most of those expected to experience short term minor effects during the construction phase.
	5.4.43	If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for example through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the Secretary of State will give significant weight to any residual harm.	
	5.4.44	The Secretary of State should consider what appropriate requirements should be attached to any consent and/or in any planning obligations entered into, in order to ensure that any mitigation or biodiversity net gain measures, if offered, are delivered and maintained. Any habitat creation or enhancement delivered including linkages with existing habitats for compensation or biodiversity net gain should generally be maintained for a minimum period of 30 years, or for the lifetime of the project, if longer.	The **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***, and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** set out measures that will be adopted to manage biodiversity through the various phases of project delivery. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** that sets out how the ecological proposals will be managed post implementation for the lifetime of the Scheme. As noted previously **The Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** confirms that there will be a gain of 79.51% in area-based habitat units, 36.91% in hedgerow units, and 5.95% in watercourse units. While a 10% gain is not achieved in relation to watercourses, the habitat creation measures as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals and to be secured through the **oLEMP [EN010141/DR/7.7]** will enhance the bank top habitat of ditches and watercourses throughout the Site. However, as a result of failures of baseline ditch condition assessment criteria related principally to low water levels and frequent drying (which is outside the control of the Scheme), the bankside habitat enhancement is not taken as enhancing the condition of watercourses within the Metric. Therefore, whilst the Scheme achieves no net loss of watercourse units, the quantitative gain in the Metric does not achieve 10%. The Scheme proposals nonetheless represent a qualitative gain of value to local biodiversity. Overall, it is concluded in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** that the Scheme will deliver a net gain for biodiversity, and that the change in units generated as part of the Scheme are proportionate to the levels of impact, with the Scheme providing other qualitative measures to enhance biodiversity At the detailed design stage the Applicant will seek to maximise BNG as far as practicable (as per Design Principle 4.1 secured by the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1])**, and it may be possible to achieve a greater BNG for all habitat types compared to the current assessment of the illustrative design. Nonetheless, as the assessment has been based on an illustrative design, out of caution and to avoid any future compliance issue, the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of:

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			• 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used the Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy. It is not currently anticipated that planning obligations would be required to secure any of the proposed measures. However, a series of DCO Requirements address these topics and the Applicant's suggested wording for the Requirements is set out in the Draft DCO **draft Development Consent Order [EN010141/DR/3.1].**
	5.4.45	The Secretary of State will need to take account of what mitigation measures may have been agreed between the applicant and the SNCB and the MMO/NRW (where appropriate). The Secretary of State will also need to consider whether the SNCB or the MMO/NRW has granted or refused, or intends to grant or refuse, any relevant licences, including protected species mitigation licences.	The Applicant has prepared an **Other Consents and Licences Statement *[EN010141/DR/5.5]*** that identifies any other consents and licences that would be required to operate the Scheme. As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. the Applicant has consulted Natural England (in their role as SNCB) throughout the pre-application stage and intends to formally agree a SOCG with them in due course. From the discussions to date there is no indication that Natural England would refuse to grant protected species mitigation licences required in connection with the Scheme.
	5.4.46	Development proposals provide many opportunities for building-in beneficial biodiversity or geological features as part of good design. The Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to environmental and biodiversity enhancements, although any weight given to gains provided to meet a legal requirement (for example under the Environment Act 2021) is likely to be limited.	The Applicant has planned to achieve environmental gains from the outset of the Scheme. The design team includes Landscape Architects and Ecologists who have developed the **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** to achieve both mitigation of the Scheme's adverse impacts, as well as opportunities for enhancement. Such opportunities have included the retention of public rights of way, provision of new permissive paths (in Site B), retention of existing trees, scrub and hedgerows as far as possible, and provision of new grassland, hedgerow and woodland habitats. Whist it is not currently a mandatory requirement for NSIP Schemes(it is expected to become mandatory for NSIPs from May 2026), for robustness the biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment has been undertaken in accordance with DEFRA's latest Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and the calculation is presented in full within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** confirms that there will be a gain of 79.51% in area-based habitat units, 36.91% in hedgerow units, and 5.95% in watercourse units. While a 10% gain is not achieved in relation to watercourses, the habitat creation measures as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals and to be secured through the **oLEMP [EN010141/DR/7.7]** will enhance the bank top habitat of ditches and watercourses throughout the Site. However, as a result of failures of baseline ditch condition assessment criteria related principally to low water levels and frequent drying (which is outside the control of the Scheme), the bankside habitat enhancement is not taken as enhancing the condition of watercourses within the Metric. Therefore, whilst the Scheme achieves no net loss of watercourse units, the quantitative gain in the Metric does not achieve 10%. The Scheme proposals nonetheless represent a qualitative gain of value to local biodiversity.

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			Overall, it is concluded in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** that the Scheme will deliver a net gain for biodiversity, and that the change in units generated as part of the Scheme are proportionate to the levels of impact, with the Scheme providing other qualitative measures to enhance biodiversity At the detailed design stage the Applicant will seek to maximise BNG as far as practicable (as per Design Principle 4.1 secured by the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]**), It may ultimately be possible to achieve a greater BNG for all habitat types compared to the current assessment of the illustrative design. Nonetheless, as the assessment has been based on an illustrative design, out of caution and to avoid any future compliance issue, the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy.
	5.4.47	When considering proposals, the Secretary of State should maximise such reasonable opportunities in and around developments, using requirements or planning obligations where appropriate. This can help towards delivering biodiversity net gain as part of or in addition to the approach set out at Section 4.6.	The **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.13]*** sets out how the proposed landscaping and habitat creation would be managed across the lifetime of the Scheme. It is proposed that the detailed Landscape and Ecology Management Plan is secured by DCO Requirements and suggested wording is set out in the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1].** The Applicant does not believe that planning obligations will be required in connection with the Scheme.
	5.4.48	In taking decisions, the Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national, and local importance; protected species; habitats and other species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity; and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment.	The **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** sets out the likely significant effects of the Scheme. Specific consideration of effects on ecology and nature conservation is provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1].** This assesses all relevent receptors within the study area attributing appropriate weight to each in the assessment of effects. The chapter concludes that the Scheme would not give rise to any significant effects during either its construction or operation. The Applicant's opinion on the weight that should be afforded to effects is set out within the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.
Secretary of State Decision Making – Habitats Regulations	5.4.49	The Secretary of State must consider whether the project is likely to have a significant effect on a protected site which is part of the National Site Network (a habitat site), a protected marine site, or on any site to which the same protection is applied as a matter of policy, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.	The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment *[EN010141/DR/5.7]*** concludes that the Scheme would not result in likely significant adverse effects on internationally designated sites either in isolation, or cumulatively with other projects and, as such, Appropriate Assessment is not required.
Secretary of State Decision Making – Sites of Special Scientific Interest	5.4.50	The Secretary of State should use requirements and/or planning obligations to mitigate the harmful aspects of the development and, where possible, to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the site's biodiversity or geological interest.	The **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** sets out proposed Requirements to secure the mitigation set out across the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** and within the outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan ***[EN010141/DR/7.7]***.

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			The Applicant does not believe that planning obligations will be required in connection with the Scheme.
Secretary of State Decision Making – Regional and Local Sites	5.4.52	The Secretary of State should give due consideration to regional or local designations. However, given the need for new nationally significant infrastructure, these designations should not be used in themselves to refuse development consent.	The **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** sets out the likely significant effects of the Scheme, and the Applicant's opinion on the weight that should be afforded to effects is set out within the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**. In this regard, it should be emphasised that **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that the scheme will not result in any significant residual adverse effects upon ecological receptors, including statutory or non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation.
Secretary of State Decision Making – Ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats	5.4.53	The Secretary of State should not grant development consent for any development that would result in the loss or deterioration of any irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.	Information on the ecological baseline within the order limits is provided in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Ecological Baseline Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and has been informed by an extended Phase 1 habitat survey and arboriculture assessment **ES Vol 2 Appendix 2-2: Arboriculture Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The surveys have not identified any ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats within the order limits. The closest ancient woodland is Huntingdon Wood, which is directly adjacent to the grid connection element of the Scheme Boundary. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that, following the implementation of embedded best practice mitigation and avoidance measures during the construction of the Scheme, it would have a neutral effect on Huntingdon Woods CWS and the Ancient Woodland contained therein. The Scheme would, therefore, not result in the loss or deterioration of any irreplaceable habitats.
Secretary of State Decision Making – Protection and enhancement of habitats and species	5.4.54	The Secretary of State should ensure that species and habitats identified as being of importance for the conservation of biodiversity are protected from the adverse effects of development by using requirements, planning obligations, or licence conditions where appropriate.	The **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** sets out the likely significant effects of the Scheme, and the Applicant's opinion on the weight that should be afforded to effects is set out within the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**. The **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** sets out Requirements to secure the mitigation set out across the **ES *[EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 /6.3]***. The Applicant does not believe that planning obligations will be required in connection with the Scheme. The Applicant does not consider that the Scheme would result in harm to either protected species or relevant habitat. This is confirmed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which draws the following overall conclusions regarding the residual effects of the Scheme on habitats and species. • The Scheme will not result in any significant residual adverse effects upon ecological receptors. • During the construction phase the Scheme would result in short term and temporary minor adverse effects on ground nesting birds, the wider breeding bird assemblage, amphibians (including great crested newt) and otter. These effects would not be significant in EIA terms. • During the operational phase the Scheme will result in a significant beneficial effect on priority habitats, other breeding birds and on foraging and commuting bats and will result in beneficial (not significant) effects for other ecological receptors.
	5.4.55	The Secretary of State should refuse consent where harm to a protected species and relevant habitat would result, unless there is an overriding public interest and the other relevant legal tests are met. In this context the Secretary of State should give substantial weight to any such harm to the detriment of biodiversity features of national or regional importance or the climate resilience and the capacity of habitats to store carbon, which they consider may result from a proposed development.	

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Civil and Military Aviation and Defence Interests			
Aviation	5.5.5	UK airspace is important for both civilian and military aviation interests. It is essential that new energy infrastructure is developed collaboratively alongside aerodromes, aircraft, air systems and airspace so that safety, operations and capabilities are not adversely affected by new energy infrastructure. Likewise, it is essential that aerodromes, aircraft, air systems and airspace operators work collaboratively with energy infrastructure developers essential for net zero. Aerodromes can have important economic and social benefits, particularly at the regional and local level, but their needs must be balanced with the urgent need for new energy developments, which bring about a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits.	The Applicant consulted with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and National Air Traffic Services (NATS) as part of the Section 42 Consultation, as set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. No comments were received with respect to the Scheme.
Applicant's Assessment	5.5.37	Where the proposed development may affect the performance of civil or military aviation CNS, meteorological radars and/or other defence assets an assessment of potential effects should be set out in the ES (see Section 4.3).	The Applicant has prepared **ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-7 Glint and Glare Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The Glint and Glare Assessment includes an assessment of the potential effects of the Scheme on aviation receptors and concludes there would be no significant adverse effects, and therefore no harm to the operational safety of nearby aerodromes. Temporary mobile task lighting may be required for maintenance during periods of low light. However, this would be brought onto Site for short periods of time and would not be used routinely. The East Park Energy Substation and the BESS compounds would have inward-facing security lighting installed. This would be operated with passive infrared (PIR) detectors or would be turned on manually for maintenance in low light conditions or in the event of an emergency. Lighting will be directional and designed in line with the guidance and principles set out in Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) GN01/2021 'Reduction of Obtrusive Light'. This will include use of appropriate luminaires and lighting levels for the purpose of the lighting, and hoods and cowls to reduce light spill beyond the area targeted for lighting. With reference to the above, the Scheme would not give rise to glare or dazzle to pilots and/or Air Traffic Control. Measures to control light from the Scheme will be set out and / or secured through the **Design Parameters Statement [EN010141/DR/7.5]**, **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.9], outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.11], outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12]** and **Statutory Nuisance Statement [EN010141/DR/7.24]**
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.5.49	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that the effects on meteorological radars, civil and military aerodromes, aviation technical sites and other defence assets or operations have been addressed by the applicant and that any necessary assessment of the proposal on aviation, NSWWS or defence interests has been carried out.	
	5.5.50	In particular, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the proposal has been designed, where possible, to minimise adverse impacts on the operation and safety of aerodromes and that realistically achievable mitigation is carried out on existing surveillance systems such as radar/tracking technologies. It is incumbent on Operators of aerodromes to regularly review the possibility of agreeing to make reasonable changes to operational procedures.	
	5.5.55	Lighting must also be designed in such a way as to ensure that there is no glare or dazzle to pilots and/or ATC, aerodrome ground lighting is not obscured and that any lighting does not diminish the effectiveness of aeronautical ground lighting and cannot be confused with aeronautical lighting. Lighting may also need to be compatible with night vision devices for military low flying purposes.	
Dust, Odour, Artificial Light, Smoke, Steam, and Insect Infestation			
Emission Impacts	5.7.1	During the construction, operation and decommissioning of energy infrastructure there is potential for the release of a range of emissions such as odour, dust, steam, smoke, artificial light and infestation of insects. All have the potential to have a detrimental impact on amenity or cause a common law nuisance or statutory nuisance under Part III, Environmental Protection Act 1990. However, they are not regulated by the environmental permitting regime, so mitigation of these impacts will need to be included in the Development Consent Order.	The Applicant has prepared a **Statutory Nuisance Statement *[EN010141/DR/7.19]*** which sets out the potential sources of nuisance as defined under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Statutory Nuisance Statement concludes that, the mitigation measures that are set out in the ES and other supporting documents for the DCO application would prevent, reduce, or avoid impacts that would have the potential to result in a statutory nuisance. These measures would be formally secured by requirements within the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**.

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	5.7.2	Note that pollution impacts from some of these emissions (for example dust, smoke) are covered in the Section 5.2 on air emissions.	
	5.7.3	Because of the potential effects of these emissions and infestation, and in view of the availability of the defence of statutory authority against nuisance claims described in Section 4.15, it is important that the potential for these impacts is considered by the applicant and Secretary of State.	
	5.7.4	For energy NSIPs of the type covered by this NPS, some impact on amenity for local communities is likely to be unavoidable. The aim should be to keep impacts to a minimum, and at a level that is acceptable.	
Applicant's Assessment	5.7.5	The applicant should assess the potential for insect infestation and emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light to have a detrimental impact on amenity, as part of the ES.	The Applicant has prepared a **Statutory Nuisance Statement *[EN010141/DR/7.19]*** which sets out the potential sources of nuisance as defined under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Scheme would not result in significant emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light during the operational phase. There is the potential for air quality impacts as a result of dust during the construction and decommissioning phases, and therefore the Applicant has prepared ***ES Vol 2 Appendix 11-3: Construction Dust Assessment*** **[EN010141/DR/6.2]** which confirms that, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures, the Scheme will have no significant adverse effect t or other unacceptable impact on any sensitive receptors. Measures to prevent dust during the decommissioning phase are outlined in the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** Control of artificial light and other emissions during the construction and decommissioning phases would be mitigated through the implementation of the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].**
	5.7.6	In particular, the assessment provided by the applicant should describe: • the type, quantity and timing of emissions • aspects of the development which may give rise to emissions • premises or locations that may be affected by the emissions • effects of the emission on identified premises or locations • measures to be employed in preventing or mitigating the emissions	
	5.7.7	The applicant is advised to consult the relevant local planning authority and, where appropriate, the EA about the scope and methodology of the assessment.	The Applicant consulted on the scope of the ES through the EIA Scoping Report which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 30th October 2023. The Planning Inspectorate reviewed and consulted on the EIA Scoping Report and published a Scoping Opinion on the 8th December 2023 (the Scoping Opinion) which included the formal responses received consultees including the local planning authority and the Environment Agency. As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has continued to consult with the EA and the Environmental Health Officers (EHO) at BBC, CCC and HDC through the pre-application period. For some topics the EHO resource was shared between the three local authorities, and this was agreed through a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA).
Mitigation	5.7.8	Mitigation measures may include one or more of the following: • engineering: prevention of a specific emission at the point of generation; control, containment and abatement of emissions if generated	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** which sets out mitigation measures (such as best practice measures) to mitigate construction phase effects. They have also prepared an **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** which sets out the same for the decommissioning phase. The

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		• lay-out: adequate distance between source and sensitive receptors; reduced transport or handling of material • administrative: limiting operating times; restricting activities allowed on the site; implementing management plans	final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) are to be secured via DCO Requirements, as set out in Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**. The **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]** lists a series of measures that will be implemented to control dust emissions on the wider highway network (e.g. sheeting of vehicles and monitoring of the road network etc.).
	5.7.9	Construction should be undertaken in a way that reduces emissions, for example the use of low emission mobile plant during the construction, and demolition phases as appropriate, and consideration should be given to making these mandatory in Development Consent Order requirements.	
	5.7.10	Demolition considerations should be embedded into designs at the outset to enable demolition techniques to be adopted that remove the need for explosive demolition.	
	5.7.11	A construction management plan may help clarify and secure mitigation.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.7.12	The Secretary of State should satisfy itself that: • an assessment of the potential for artificial light, dust, odour, smoke, steam and insect infestation to have a detrimental impact on amenity has been carried out • that all reasonable steps have been taken, and will be taken, to minimise any such detrimental impacts	The Applicant has prepared a **Statutory Nuisance Statement *[EN010141/DR/5.4]*** which sets out the potential sources of nuisance as defined under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Statutory Nuisance Statement concludes that, the mitigation measures that are set out in the ES and other supporting documents for the DCO application would prevent, reduce, or avoid impacts that would have the potential to result in a statutory nuisance. These measures would be formally secured by requirements within the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** which sets out mitigation measures (such as best practice measures) to mitigate construction phase effects. They have also prepared an **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** which sets out the same for the decommissioning phase. The final CEMP and DEMP are to be secured via DCO Requirements, as set out in Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**.
	5.7.13	If development consent is granted for a project, the Secretary of State should consider whether there is a justification for all the authorised project (including any associated development) to be covered by a defence of statutory authority against nuisance claims. If the Secretary of State cannot conclude that this is justified, the Secretary of State should disapply in whole or in part the defence through a provision in the Development Consent Order.	
	5.7.14	Where the Secretary of State believes it appropriate, the Secretary of State may consider attaching requirements to the development consent, to secure certain mitigation measures.	
	5.7.15	In particular, the Secretary of State should consider whether to require the applicant to abide by a scheme of management and mitigation concerning insect infestation and emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light from the development. The Secretary of State should consider the need for such a scheme to reduce any loss to amenity which might arise during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the development. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at that stage.	
Flood Risk			

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Flood Risk	5.8.3	The government's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Policy Statement sets out our ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk. It outlines policies and actions which will accelerate progress to better protect and better prepare the country against flooding and coastal erosion. The industry should consider any updates to government policy and apply updated approaches as a matter of priority.	The Applicant has given due regard to the government's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Policy Statement and other statutory and policy requirements in the preparation of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, and the statutory Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) at **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.
	5.8.5	Climate change is already having an impact and is expected to have an increasing impact on the UK throughout this century. The UK Climate Projections 2018 show an increased chance of milder, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers in the UK, with more intensive rainfall causing flooding. Sea levels will continue to rise beyond the end of the century, increasing risks to vulnerable coastal communities. Within the lifetime of energy projects, these factors will lead to increased flood risks in areas susceptible to flooding, and to an increased risk of the occurrence of floods in some areas which are not currently thought of as being at risk. A robust approach to flood risk management is a vital element of climate change adaptation; the applicant and the Secretary of State should take account of the policy on climate change adaptation in Section 4.10.	The Applicant has taken account of future climate projects in the preparation of the FRA at **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has consulted with the EA and they have provided advice in relation to the climate change allowances that should be used for fluvial and tidal flood modelling.
	5.8.6	The aims of planning policy on development and flood risk are to ensure that flood risk from all sources of flooding is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant effects on Hydrology and Flood Risk quality as a result of the Scheme. All potential sources of flooding have been reviewed as part of the assessment including fluvial (from rivers), tidal, surface water, sewer flooding, groundwater and artificial sources. Whilst the Site has watercourses running through it, the EA's fluvial flood map shows that flood zones are limited in extent, being largely restricted to the immediate proximity of watercourses. The EA's pluvial flood map also indicates that there are also localised areas of surface water flooding the Site, the most significant of which are associated with and close to watercourses. The Applicant has undertaken a Sequential Test assessment in connection with the Scheme the results of which are reported within Section 4.0 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The main application of the Sequential Test was undertaken during the site selection exercise which is set out within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2].** In assessing suitable sites, the Applicant considered a series of factors (including flood risk) that, to a greater or lesser extent, are important in determining whether alternative sites exist that represent '*reasonably available'* alternatives. The conclusion is that when taking into account wider sustainable objectives there are compelling reasons that there are no other sites reasonably available within the search area that are at a lower flood risk than the Site. Accordingly, **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2** concludes that the Sequential Test has been satisfied for the Scheme. Following the application of the sequential test in site selection the Applicant then applied the sequential approach when developing the Scheme layout and deciding upon the siting of infrastructure, this approach is also summarised in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. For fluvial flood risk, this has ensured that all critical infrastructure is located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 and that no electrical infrastructure would be placed within a 10m buffer of any watercourses, irrespective of whether there is a medium or high risk of flooding. Consequently, only a very small
	5.8.7	Where new energy infrastructure is, exceptionally, necessary in flood risk areas (for example where there are no reasonably available sites in areas at lower risk), policy aims to make it safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, by reducing flood risk overall. It should also be designed and constructed to remain operational in times of flood.	
	5.8.9	If, following application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible, (taking into account wider sustainable development objectives), for the project to be located in areas of lower flood risk the Exception Test can be applied as defined in https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#table2. The test provides a method of allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available.	
	5.8.10	The Exception Test is only appropriate for use where the Sequential Test alone cannot deliver an acceptable site. It would only be appropriate to move onto the Exception Test when the Sequential Test has identified reasonably available, lower risk sites appropriate for the proposed development where, accounting for wider sustainable development objectives, application of relevant policies would provide a clear reason for refusing development in any alternative locations identified. Examples could include alternative site(s) that are subject to national designations such as landscape, heritage and nature conservation designations, for example Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), SSSIs and World Heritage Sites (WHS) which would not usually be considered appropriate.	

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	5.8.11	Both elements of the Exception Test will have to be satisfied for development to be consented. To pass the Exception Test it should be demonstrated that: • the project would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk; and • the project will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible will reduce flood risk overall.	amount of the Scheme elements would be within areas of floor risk and only where it is essential, such as bridge crossings of watercourses. In terms of pluvial flooding Paragraph 027 of the PPG for Flood Risk and Coastal Change states that a proportionate approach should be taken to the application of the sequential test, and that where a FRA demonstrates that a development would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (without increasing flood risk elsewhere), then the sequential test does not need to be applied. It will be necessary for a small number of panels to be located in the pluvial flood extents shown on EA mapping Where PV panels are to be located in pluvial flood extents, they will be installed such that the underside of the panels will be above the maximum predicted flood levels , with only supporting legs of the mounting tables within the flood extent. The supporting legs have a small cross-sectional area and would have a negligible impact on pluvial flood risk. On this basis, and in accordance with the PPG, the sequential test need not be applied with regard to surface water flood risk. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.concludes that a sequential approach to the placement of infrastructure has been adopted throughout the development process in reference to the assessed flood risk data. Where it has been necessary for parts of the Scheme to be sited in fluvial or surface water flood risk zones, it has been clearly demonstrated why it is either not impacted by flood risk or how it has been mitigated. The Applicant has also presented evidence on the Exception Test within Section 4.0 **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. As all critical infrastructure has been sited in areas at the lowest risk of flooding (i.e. within Flood Zone 1) and the Scheme would remain operational and safe in times of flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere the Scheme is considered to have passed the requirements of the Exception Test. Finally, to ensure that the development doesn't increase offsite flood risk, the design will incorporate a SuDS scheme to manage surface water runoff, this is detailed in the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]**. The oSWMP will ensure a neutral or beneficial effect on on-site and third-party surface water flood risks.
	5.8.12	Development should be designed to ensure there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change throughout the lifetime of the development. There should be no net loss of floodplain storage and any deflection or constriction of flood flow routes should be safely managed within the site. Mitigation measures should make as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy** present an assessment of flood risk including the potential for off-site flood risk as a result of the Scheme. The Scheme would not increase flood risk off-site for any potential receptors. Sustainable urban Drainage System (SuDS) features have been incorporated into the drainage design to control surface water runoff from these features to greenfield rates. The **oSWMP [EN010141/DR/7.13]** details the principles of runoff control for the Scheme. As set out in **ES Volume 2 Appendix 8-3: Watercourse Crossing Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** watercourse crossings would be designed and sized to ensure they can accommodate appropriately modelled storm flows for the upstream catchments, selected based upon the vulnerability of potential receptors.
Applicant's Assessment	5.8.13	A site-specific flood risk assessment should be provided for all energy projects in Flood Zones 2 and 3 in England or Zones B and C in Wales. In Flood Zone 1 in England or Zone A in Wales, an assessment should accompany all proposals involving: • sites of 1 hectare or more	The Applicant has prepared a site-specific FRA which can be found at **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** which along with **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** assesses the impact of the Scheme to all forms of flooding. The assessment concludes that, accounting for embedded and additional mitigations, there

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		• land which has been identified by the EA or NRW as having critical drainage problems • land identified (for example in a local authority strategic flood risk assessment) as being at increased flood risk in future • land that may be subject to other sources of flooding (for example surface water) • where the EA or NRW, Lead Local Flood Authority, Internal Drainage Board or other body have indicated that there may be drainage problems.	would be no significant effects during either the construction, operational or decommissioning stages of the Scheme. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]**meets the requirements set out in para. 5.8.15 of the NPS and has been prepared with regard to the Planning Practice Guidance Flood Risk and Coastal Change section.
	5.8.14	This assessment should identify and assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the project and demonstrate how these flood risks will be managed, taking climate change into account.	
	5.8.15	The minimum requirements for Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) are that they should: • be proportionate to the risk and appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the project; • consider the risk of flooding arising from the project in addition to the risk of flooding to the project; • take the impacts of climate change into account, across a range of climate scenarios, clearly stating the development lifetime over which the assessment has been made; • be undertaken by competent people, as early as possible in the process of preparing the proposal; • consider both the potential adverse and beneficial effects of flood risk management infrastructure, including raised defences, flow channels, flood storage areas and other artificial features, together with the consequences of their failure and exceedance; • consider the vulnerability of those using the site, including arrangements for safe access and escape; • consider and quantify the different types of flooding (whether from natural and human sources and including joint and cumulative effects) and include information on flood likelihood, speed-of-onset, depth, velocity, hazard and duration; • identify and secure opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding overall, making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management; • consider the effects of a range of flooding events including extreme events on people, property, the natural and historic environment and river and coastal processes; • include the assessment of the remaining (known as 'residual') risk after risk reduction measures have been taken into account and demonstrate that these risks can be safely managed, ensuring people will not be exposed to hazardous flooding; • consider how the ability of water to soak into the ground may change with development, along with how the proposed layout of the project may affect drainage systems. Information should include: i. Describe the existing surface water drainage arrangements for the site	

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		ii. Set out (approximately) the existing rates and volumes of surface water run-off generated by the site. Detail the proposals for restricting discharge rates iii. Set out proposals for managing and discharging surface water from the site using sustainable drainage systems and accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change. If sustainable drainage systems have been rejected, present clear evidence of why their inclusion would be inappropriate iv. Demonstrate how the hierarchy of drainage options has been followed.218 v. Explain and justify why the types of SuDS219 and method of discharge have been selected and why they are considered appropriate. vi. Explain how sustainable drainage systems have been integrated with other aspects of the development such as open space or green infrastructure, so as to ensure an efficient use of the site vii. Describe the multifunctional benefits the sustainable drainage system will provide viii. Set out which opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding have been identified and included as part of the proposed sustainable drainage system ix. Explain how run-off from the completed development will be prevented from causing an impact elsewhere x. Explain how the sustainable drainage system been designed to facilitate maintenance and, where relevant, adoption. Set out plans for ensuring an acceptable standard of operation and maintenance throughout the lifetime of the development • detail those measures that will be included to ensure the development will be safe and remain operational during a flooding event throughout the development's lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere; • identify and secure opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding overall during the period of construction; and • be supported by appropriate data and information, including historical information on previous events.	
	5.8.16	Further guidance can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance Flood Risk and Coastal Change section which accompanies the NPPF, TAN15 for Wales or successor documents.	
	5.8.17	Development (including construction works) will need to account for any existing watercourses and flood and coastal erosion risk management structures or features, or any land likely to be needed for future structures or features so as to ensure: • Access, clearances and sufficient land are retained to enable their maintenance, repair, operation, and replacement, as necessary • Their standard of protection is not reduced • Their condition or structural integrity is not reduced	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents an assessment of the likely significant effects on existing watercourses. As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has consulted with the EA, BCC, HDC and CCC as Lead Local Flood Authorities on impacts to existing watercourses around the Site. The surface water drainage has adopted a Sustainable Urban Drainage Solution (SuDS) design which would replicate natural drainage pathways and provide appropriate level of treatment of runoff at source before entering watercourses. The **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***, and **outline Decommissioning**

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			Environmental Management Plan ***[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** and the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]** set out embedded mitigation measures to protect watercourses and existing structures.
	5.8.18	Applicants for projects which may be affected by, or may add to, flood risk should arrange pre-application discussions before the official pre-application stage of the NSIP process with the EA or NRW, and, where relevant, other bodies such as Lead Local Flood Authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, sewerage undertakers, navigation authorities, highways authorities and reservoir owners and operators.	As detailed in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has engaged with the EA, BBC, HDC and CCC, during the pre-application period and as part of the statutory consultation. The Applicant has had regard to the advice received, as detailed within the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The Planning Inspectorate advised in the Scoping Response that the FRA should be based on the requirements of the EA's standing advice and the EA comments to the Applicant's request for a Scoping Opinion. The EA response to the Scoping Request informed the approach taken in the PEIR, and subsequent comments used to inform **ES Volume 2 Appendix 9-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2].**
	5.8.19	Such discussions should identify the likelihood and possible extent and nature of the flood risk, help scope the FRA, and identify the information that will be required by the Secretary of State to reach a decision on the application when it is submitted. The Secretary of State should advise applicants to undertake these steps where they appear necessary but have not yet been addressed.	
	5.8.20	If the EA, NRW or another flood risk management authority has reasonable concerns about the proposal on flood risk grounds, the applicant should discuss these concerns with the EA or NRW and take all reasonable steps to agree ways in which the proposal might be amended, or additional information provided, which would satisfy the authority's concerns.	
	5.8.21	The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account. Where it is not possible to locate development in low-risk areas, the Sequential Test should go on to compare reasonably available sites with medium risk areas and then, only where there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high-risk areas.	The Applicant has undertaken a Sequential Test that is reported within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. It is confirmed the Scheme / Site meets the requirements of the Sequential Test.
	5.8.22	The technology specific NPSs set out some exceptions to the application of the Sequential Test. However, when seeking development consent on a site allocated in a development plan through the application of the Sequential Test, informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, applicants need not apply the Sequential Test, provided the proposed development is consistent with the use for which the site was allocated and there is no new flood risk information that would have affected the outcome of the test.	
	5.8.23	Consideration of alternative sites should take account of the policy on alternatives set out in Section 4.3 above. All projects should apply the Sequential Test to locating development within the site.	
Mitigation	5.8.24	To satisfactorily manage flood risk, arrangements are required to manage surface water and the impact of the natural water cycle on people and property.	

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	5.8.25	In this NPS, the term SuDS refers to the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management including, where appropriate: • source control measures including rainwater recycling and drainage • infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground, that can include individual soakaways and communal facilities • filter strips and swales, which are vegetated features that hold and drain water downhill mimicking natural drainage patterns • filter drains and porous pavements to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed • basins, ponds and tanks to hold excess water after rain and allow controlled discharge that avoids flooding • flood routes to carry and direct excess water through developments to minimise the impact of severe rainfall flooding	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2] outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.19]** sets out the measures that will be adopted to manage surface water flood risk and drainage of the Scheme. The Scheme will be drained using sustainable drainage techniques that have been designed with regard to climate change allowances. The proposed drainage will ensure that surface water run-off from the Scheme does not exceed the existing run-off rates prior to the proposed project being constructed. The proposed drainage would be delivered within the Order limits and would not require the need of planning obligations. No ground modification is proposed, and the existing runoff / overland flow regime will not change.
	5.8.26	Site layout and surface water drainage systems should cope with events that exceed the design capacity of the system, so that excess water can be safely stored on or conveyed from the site without adverse impacts.	
	5.8.27	The surface water drainage arrangements for any project should, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change throughout the development's lifetime, be such that the volumes and peak flow rates of surface water leaving the site are no greater than the rates prior to the proposed project, unless specific off-site arrangements are made and result in the same net effect.	
	5.8.28	It may be necessary to provide surface water storage and infiltration to limit and reduce both the peak rate of discharge from the site and the total volume discharged from the site. There may be circumstances where it is appropriate for infiltration facilities or attenuation storage to be provided outside the project site, if necessary through the use of a planning obligation.	
	5.8.29	The sequential approach should be applied to the layout and design of the project. Vulnerable aspects of the development should be located on parts of the site at lower risk and residual risk of flooding. Applicants should seek opportunities to use open space for multiple purposes such as amenity, wildlife habitat and flood storage uses. Opportunities should be taken to lower flood risk by reducing the built footprint of previously developed sites and using SuDS.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and the supporting **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]**, the layout of the Scheme has followed a sequential approach to avoid placing vulnerable aspects of the development within areas at greater flood risk. As an example, the BESS and East Park Energy Substation have been located, within Flood Zone 1, as they would be vulnerable to flooding. Where it has not been possible to avoid placing vulnerable infrastructure within areas at risk of flooding (surface water flooding), the sensitive or vulnerable aspects of the infrastructure components have been raised above a design flood level informed by hydraulic modelling.
	5.8.30	Where a development may result in an increase in flood risk elsewhere through the loss of flood storage, on-site level-for-level compensatory storage, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the development, should be provided.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** present an assessment of flood

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	5.8.31	Where it is not possible to provide compensatory storage on site, it may be acceptable to provide it off-site if it is hydraulically and hydrologically linked. Where development may cause the deflection or constriction of flood flow routes, these will need to be safely managed within the site.	risk including the potential for off-site flood risk as a result of the Scheme. The Scheme would not increase flood risk off-site for any potential receptors.
	5.8.32	Where development may contribute to a cumulative increase in flood risk elsewhere, the provision of multifunctional sustainable drainage systems, natural flood management and green infrastructure can also make a valuable contribution to mitigating this risk whilst providing wider benefits.	An assessment of the potential cumulative effects of the Scheme in combination with other emerging or consented developments is provided within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 17: Cumulative and Intra Project Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment concludes the Scheme would not contribute to a cumulative increase in flood risk elsewhere.
	5.8.33	The receipt of and response to warnings of floods is an essential element in the management of the residual risk of flooding. Flood Warning and evacuation plans should be in place for those areas at an identified risk of flooding.	The Applicant has prepared a Flood Risk Assessment as **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.19]** which identifies the required mitigation measures to manage flood risk. As the Scheme would not be significantly affected by flood risk there is no need for either flood warning or evacuation plans. Mitigation measures to manage the response to flood risk for all phases of the Scheme are set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***, and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. These control documents are secured by a Requirement of the DCO, as set out in Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**.
	5.8.34	The applicant should take advice from the local authority emergency planning team, emergency services and, where appropriate, from the local resilience forum when producing an evacuation plan for a manned energy project as part of the FRA. Any emergency planning documents, flood warning and evacuation procedures that are required should be identified in the FRA.	
	5.8.35	Flood resistant and resilient materials and design should be adopted to minimise damage and speed recovery in the event of a flood.	The Scheme has been designed to be resilient to flood risk, as set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.8.36	In determining an application for development consent, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that where relevant: • the application is supported by an appropriate FRA • the Sequential Test has been applied and satisfied as part of site selection • a sequential approach has been applied at the site level to minimise risk by directing the most vulnerable uses to areas of lowest flood risk • the proposal is in line with any relevant national and local flood risk management strategy • SuDS (as required in the next paragraph on National Standards) have been used unless there is clear evidence that their use would be inappropriate • in flood risk areas the project is designed and constructed to remain safe and operational during its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere (subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 5.8.42) • the project includes safe access and escape routes where required, as part of an agreed emergency plan, and that any residual risk can be safely managed over the lifetime of the development	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant effects on Hydrology and Flood Risk quality as a result of the Scheme. The assessment is supported by a standalone FRA and Drainage Strategy which forms **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. AS reported within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The Applicant has applied and satisfied the requirements of the Sequential Test during site selection. In addition, in developing the layout of the Scheme the Applicant has also followed the sequential approach to avoid placing vulnerable aspects of the development within areas at greater flood risk. The Applicant has also satisfied the requirements of the exception test. The use of SUDS (including their treatment and maintenance) is addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Volume 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** Mitigation measures to manage the response to flood risk for all phases of the Scheme are set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***, and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** and the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]**. These control documents would all be secured by a requirement of the DCO, as set out in Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**.

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		• land that is likely to be needed for present or future flood risk management infrastructure has been appropriately safeguarded from development to the extent that development would not prevent or hinder its construction, operation or maintenance	
	5.8.37	For energy projects which have drainage implications, approval for the project's drainage system, including during the construction period, will form part of the development consent issued by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will therefore need to be satisfied that the proposed drainage system complies with any National Standards published by Ministers under paragraph 5(1) of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** sets out how the Scheme will be drained.
	5.8.38	In addition, the Development Consent Order, or any associated planning obligations, will need to make provision for appropriate operation and maintenance of any SuDS throughout the project's lifetime. Where this is secured through the adoption of any SuDS features, any necessary access rights to property will need to be granted.	The Site Operator will be responsible for the safe operation and maintenance of the SuDS for the lifetime of the Scheme. Once operational, the SuDS will be maintained in accordance with the provisions of the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***.
	5.8.39	Where relevant, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the most appropriate body is being given the responsibility for maintaining any SuDS, taking into account the nature and security of the infrastructure on the proposed site. Responsible bodies could include, for example the landowner, the relevant lead local flood authority or water and sewerage company (through the Ofwat-approved Sewerage Sector Guidance), or another body, such as an Internal Drainage Board.	
	5.8.40	If the EA, NRW or another flood risk management authority continues to have concerns and objects to the grant of development consent on the grounds of flood risk, the Secretary of State can grant consent, but would need to be satisfied before deciding whether or not to do so that all reasonable steps have been taken by the applicant and the authority to try to resolve the concerns.	The Applicant has consulted with the EA and the relevant Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) during the pre-application period as set out in the **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**.
	5.8.41	Energy projects should not normally be consented within Flood Zone 3b, or Zone C2 in Wales, or on land expected to fall within these zones within its predicted lifetime. This may also apply where land is subject to other sources of flooding (for example surface water). However, where essential energy infrastructure has to be located in such areas, for operational reasons, they should only be consented if the development will not result in a net loss of floodplain storage, and will not impede water flows.	The Scheme is not located within Flood Zone 3b.
	5.8.42	Exceptionally, where an increase in flood risk elsewhere cannot be avoided or wholly mitigated, the Secretary of State may grant consent if they are satisfied that the increase in present and future flood risk can be mitigated to an acceptable and safe level and taking account of the benefits of, including the need for, nationally significant energy infrastructure as set out in Part 3 above. In any such case the Secretary of State should make clear how, in reaching their decision, they have weighed up the increased flood risk against the benefits of the project, taking account of the nature and degree of the risk, the future impacts on climate change, and advice provided by the EA or NRW and other relevant bodies.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme would not increase flood risk off-site for any potential receptors. The Applicant's opinion on the weight that should be afforded to effects is set out within the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.

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Historic Environment			
Applicant's Assessment	5.9.9	The applicant should undertake an assessment of any likely significant heritage impacts of the proposed development as part of the EIA, and describe these along with how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied in the ES (see Section 4.3). This should include consideration of heritage assets above, at, and below the surface of the ground. Consideration will also need to be given to the possible impacts, including cumulative, on the wider historic environment. The assessment should include reference to any historic landscape or seascape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing impacts relevant to the proposed project.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. This includes above and below ground heritage assets, designated and non-designated assets, and the potential for cumulative effects on the wider historic environment. The incorporated mitigation in relation to direct or indirect impacts is largely related to the design avoiding known heritage as is presented in Section 6.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** with further detail presented within the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15].** The recommended mitigation strategies for the identified direct and indirect impacts upon heritage assets is presented in Section 6.9 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**and the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** The assessment of potential setting effects has considered all Locally Listed Buildings within 1km, all designated assets within 3km and selected designated assets beyond 3km as agreed via scoping consultation with Historic England, Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record (BBHER) and the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET). Selected non-designated assets were also scoped into the assessment of potential setting effects as agreed via consultation with the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Team (BBHET) and CHET. The baseline for settings assessment is presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Settings Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. Neither the BBHER nor the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) were able to provide Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data. Further discussion with BBHET has confirmed that the potential for impact on the historic landscape could be undertaken as part of the settings impact assessments of the designated assets as considered within their landscapes, and by a map regression assessment. This is presented within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2].**
	5.9.10	As part of the ES the applicant should provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the applicant should have consulted the relevant Historic Environment Record (or, where the development is in English or Welsh waters, Historic England or Cadw) and assessed the heritage assets themselves using expertise where necessary according to the proposed development's impact.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.describes the significance of heritage assets that will be impacted by the proposed development. It also presents the methodology and approach to determining significance of heritage assets (including non-designated assets) and sets out the data sources that were consulted including the BBHER and CHER. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-1: Gazetteer of Heritage Assets and Events [EN010141/DR/6.2]** provides a description of all heritage assets identified within the Study Areas, whilst further discussion of the identified heritage baseline (formed by these assets) is presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The identified and potential non-designated heritage assets which may be subject to direct and indirect impacts are presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.presents the methodology and approach to for establishing the relative sensitivity of a Heritage Asset to changes to its setting. The assessment of potential setting effects includes descriptions of the significance of the settings of the Heritage Assets as is presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Settings Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**

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	5.9.11	Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or the available evidence suggests it has the potential to include, heritage assets with an archaeological interest, the applicant should carry out appropriate desk-based assessment and, where such desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation. Where proposed development will affect the setting of a heritage asset, accurate representative visualisations may be necessary to explain the impact.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides a desk-based assessment of the known archaeology at the Site, and the potential for as yet undiscovered archaeology to be impacted by the Scheme. A detailed assessment of settings effects is provided **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Settings Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2].** It has not been necessary to prepare representative visualisations to explain impacts. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-5: Archaeological Geophysical Survey Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** presents the results of the Archaeological geophysical survey and field evaluation that has been undertaken across the Scheme. The recommended mitigation strategies for the identified direct and indirect impacts upon heritage assets are presented in Section 6.9 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15].** As presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Settings Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and in section 6.6 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, The assessment of potential settings effects has identified temporary significant effects during the construction phase upon the settings of the Old Manor House, Cretingsbury: a motte castle and moated manor house Scheduled Monument (Asset 4) to the east of Little Staughton, the Grade I Listed Church of All Saints (Asset 38), to the east of Little Staughton, the Roman small town south of Great Staughton Scheduled Monument (Asset 991) within the northern part of Site C and the possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western part of Site D. Due to the implementation of further mitigation, the identified temporary effects upon the setting of designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site during the construction phase would not continue beyond the completion of the construction phase. The assessment has established that during the operational phase of the Scheme would have a significant residual effect (in EIA terms) upon the setting of a single heritage asset, which is upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D. As the overall significance of this asset will remain intact and appreciable following development of the Scheme, the level of harm is considered to be 'less than substantial'. The policy test in NPS EN-1 specifies that this 'less than substantial' harm this 'should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. The assessment of harm vs benefits is provided in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** which concludes the benefits would clearly outweigh any disbenefits for the development. No significant effects have been identified upon the settings of any of the other heritage assets considered by this assessment.
	5.9.12	The applicant should ensure that the extent of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of any heritage assets affected can be adequately understood from the application and supporting documents. Studies will be required on those heritage assets affected by noise, vibration, light and indirect impacts, the extent and detail of these studies will be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset affected.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. In doing so reference is made to the following supporting appendices: • **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-1 Gazetteer of Heritage Assets and Events [EN010141/DR/6.2]** • **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** • **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-3: Photographic Record [EN010141/DR/6.2]** • **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Settings Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**

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			• **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-5: Archaeological Geophysical Survey Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**; and • **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-6: Archaeological Targeted Trial Trench Evaluation Interim Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** • **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-7: Archaeological Trial Trenching Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** The settings assessment (**ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Settings Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2])** has been, in part, informed by review of the ZTVs, and visualisations produced as part of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** The assessment of direct and indirect impacts has been, in part, informed by **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which includes details of the lack of anticipated significant impacts upon groundwater and the proposed drainage strategy mitigating against the potential for run-off and scouring. It was not considered likely that noise, vibration, or light would affect any assets identified within the Study Areas with the levels of direct, indirect and visual impacts on setting representing the worst case in terms of levels of potential impact.
	5.9.13	The applicant is encouraged, where opportunities exist, to prepare proposals which can make a positive contribution to the historic environment, and to consider how their scheme takes account of the significance of heritage assets affected. This can include, where possible: • enhancing, through a range of measures such a sensitive design, the significance of heritage assets or setting affected • considering where required the development of archive capacity which could deliver significant public benefits • considering how visual or noise impacts can affect heritage assets, and whether there may be opportunities to enhance access to, or interpretation, understanding and appreciation of, the heritage assets affected by the scheme	The Applicant has considered how the Proposed Development accounts for the significance of the heritage assets affected. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** show how the Applicant has incorporated mitigation measures to avoid known heritage assets. Completion of the recommended mitigation works would provide an opportunity to enhance our understanding of any buried remains encountered. The aforementioned measures are supplemented by those set out in the **outline Heritage Enhancement Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.16]**, which contains recommended measures for making a positive contribution to the historic environment. These measures are also summarised in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	5.9.14	Careful consideration in preparing the scheme will be required on whether the impacts on the historic environment will be direct or indirect, temporary, or permanent.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated appendices presents an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology and whether impacts upon the historic environment will be direct, indirect, temporary or permanent. Direct (which would also be permanent) and indirect impacts are presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The potential for temporary impacts on the historic environment (related to Construction Phase effects upon setting) are presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Settings Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment of potential settings effects has identified temporary significant effects upon the settings of the Old Manor House, Cretingsbury: a motte castle and moated manor house Scheduled Monument (Asset 4) to the east of Little Staughton, the Grade I Listed Church of All Saints (Asset 38), to the east of Little Staughton, the Roman small town south of Great Staughton Scheduled Monument (Asset 991) within the northern part of Site C and the possible no-designated moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western part of Site D during the construction phase.

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			Due to the implementation of further mitigation, the identified temporary effects upon the setting of designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site during the construction phase would not continue beyond the completion of the construction phase. The assessment has established that during the operational phase of the Scheme would have a significant residual effect (in EIA terms) upon the setting of a single heritage asset, which is upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D. As the overall significance of this asset will remain intact and appreciable following development of the Scheme, the level of harm is considered to be 'less than substantial'. The policy test in NPS EN-1 specifies that this 'less than substantial' harm this 'should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. The assessment of harm vs benefits is provided in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** which concludes the benefits would clearly outweigh any disbenefits for the development. No significant effects have been identified upon the settings of any of the other heritage assets considered by the assessment. In terms of buried remains, it will be possible to mitigate or offset any potential direct impacts on significant archaeological remains through design (avoidance), utilisation of 'no dig solutions (reducing the level of impact) or through programmes of archaeological monitoring, excavation and recording which would allow any remains to be 'preserved by record'. Therefore, direct effects would either be avoided, minimised or offset.
	5.9.15	Applicants should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.	The Applicant has considered whether there are opportunities for enhancing or better revealing the significance of heritage assets, including the Scheduled Ancient Monument that was found as a result of the Proposed Development (Area C). These opportunities are presented within the **outline Heritage Enhancement Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.16]**,and outlined in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** The Site is not located within the extent of any Conservation Areas or World Heritage Sites (WHS).
Mitigation	5.9.16	A documentary record of our past is not as valuable as retaining the heritage asset, and therefore the ability to record evidence of the asset should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted, and whether or not consent should be given.	The results of the geophysical survey and trial trenching have been used to identify Areas of Archaeological Constraint (AACs), where there is considered to be a high potential for further buried remains of at least regional (Medium) importance. Outside the AACs there is considered to be a Low potential for archaeological remains of at least regional (Medium) importance (of any date). The Applicant has purposely set out to avoid, where possible, direct and indirect impacts upon identified heritage assets allowing for them to continue to be 'preserved in situ' within identified Areas of Archaeological Constraint (AACs). These are presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1],** the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** and **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6].** The identified and potential non-designated heritage assets which may be subject to direct and indirect impacts are presented in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** The recommended mitigation strategies for the identified direct and indirect impacts upon heritage assets are presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1],** and the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15].**
	5.9.17	Where the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, the Secretary of State will require the applicant to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost (wholly or in part). The extent of the requirement should be proportionate to the asset's importance and significance and the impact. The applicant should be required to publish this evidence and to deposit copies of the reports with the relevant Historic Environmental Record. They should also be required to deposit the archive generated in a local museum or other public repository willing to receive it.	
	5.9.18	Where appropriate, the Secretary of State will impose requirements on the Development Consent Order to ensure that the work is undertaken in a timely manner, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that complies with the policy in this NPS and which	

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		has been agreed in writing with the relevant local authority, and to ensure that the completion of the exercise is properly secured.	Both the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** and any future WSI produced and agreed with HE, BBHET and CHET in relation to the proposed mitigation works would include a requirement for the deposition of the results with the HER (both BBHER and CHER) and a suitable archiving strategy. As set out previously, the assessment of potential settings effects has identified a single Significant (in EIA terms) adverse residual effect which is upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D. The Applicant has recommended a mitigation strategy related to the potential for direct and indirect impacts on potential archaeological remains and this is presented in the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** A Requirement of Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** will secure the provision of an archaeological mitigation strategy, including any required written scheme of archaeological investigation(or multiple written schemes of archaeological investigation) prior to work commencing on Site.
	5.9.19	Where the loss of significance of any heritage asset has been justified by the applicant on the merits of the new development and the significance of the asset in question, the Secretary of State should consider: • imposing a requirement in the Development Consent Order • requiring the applicant to enter into an obligation	The Applicant has recommended a mitigation strategy related to the potential for direct and indirect impacts on potential archaeological remains as is presented in the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** A Requirement of Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** will secure the provision of an archaeological mitigation strategy, including any required written scheme of archaeological investigation(or multiple written schemes of archaeological investigation) prior to work commencing on Site.
	5.9.20	That will prevent the loss occurring until the relevant part of the development has commenced, or it is reasonably certain that the relevant part of the development is to proceed.	
	5.9.21	Where there is a high probability (based on an adequate assessment) that a development site may include, as yet undiscovered heritage assets with archaeological interest, the Secretary of State will consider requirements to ensure appropriate procedures are in place for the identification and treatment of such assets discovered during construction.	With reference to **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** there is: • High potential for Roman remains within the cable corridor between Sites C and D.. • Areas of Archaeological Constraint (AACs) have been identified where there is considered to be a high potential for further remains of at least regional (Medium) importance. • Along the Site B to Site C Cable Corridor, it is assessed that there is a high potential for remains dating from the medieval and post-medieval periods • Within Site D there is a high potential for buried remains dating from the Iron Age to Roman periods and High potential for remains dating from the medieval and post-medieval periods The Applicant has recommended a mitigation strategy related to the potential for direct and indirect impacts on potential archaeological remains as is presented in the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].**
	5.9.22	In determining applications, the Secretary of State should seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposed	The Applicant has described the significance of heritage assets that will be impacted by the Scheme.

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Secretary of State Decision Making		development, including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset (including assets whose setting may be affected by the proposed development), taking account of: • relevant information provided with the application and, where applicable, relevant information submitted during the examination of the application • any designation records, including those on the National Heritage List for England, or included on Cof Cymru for Wales • historic landscape character records • the relevant Historic Environment Record(s), and similar sources of information • representations made by interested parties during the examination process • expert advice, where appropriate, and when the need to understand the significance of the heritage asset demands it	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** present the methodology and approach to determining significance of heritage assets (including non-designated assets) the data sources that were consulted including the BBHER and CHER. The chapter also presents the methodology and approach to for establishing the relative sensitivity of a heritage asset to changes to its setting. The assessment of potential setting effects includes descriptions of the significance of the settings of the heritage assets as is presented in Table 1 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2.** A comprehensive gazetteer of heritage assets and events is provided as **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-1: Gazetteer of Heritage Assets and Events [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. A description of the significance of relevant heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments and an assessment of their settings is provided across **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Setting Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The assessment of potential settings effects has identified temporary significant construction phase effects upon the settings of the Old Manor House, Cretingsbury: a motte castle and moated manor house Scheduled Monument (Asset 4) to the east of Little Staughton, the Grade I Listed Church of All Saints (Asset 38), to the east of Little Staughton, the Roman small town south of Great Staughton Scheduled Monument (Asset 991) within the northern part of Site C and the possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western part of Site D. Due to the implementation of further mitigation, the identified temporary effects upon the setting of designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site during the construction phase would not continue beyond the completion of the construction phase. The assessment has established that during the operational phase of the Scheme would have a significant residual effect (in EIA terms) upon the setting of a single heritage asset, which is upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D. As the overall significance of this asset will remain intact and appreciable following development of the Scheme, the level of harm is considered to be 'less than substantial'. The policy test in NPS EN-1 specifies that this 'less than substantial' harm this 'should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. The assessment of harm vs benefits is provided in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** which concludes the benefits would clearly outweigh any disbenefits for the development. No significant effects have been identified upon the settings of any of the other heritage assets considered by this assessment. In terms of buried remains, it will be possible to mitigate or offset any potential direct impacts on significant archaeological remains through design (avoidance), utilisation of 'no dig solutions (reducing the level of impact) or through programmes of archaeological monitoring, excavation and recording which would allow any remains to be 'preserved by record'. Therefore, direct effects would either be avoided, minimised or offset.
	5.9.23	The Secretary of State must also comply with the requirements on listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments, set out in Regulation 3 of the Infrastructure Planning (Decisions) Regulations 2010.	
	5.9.24	In considering the impact of a proposed development on any heritage assets, the Secretary of State should consider the particular nature of the significance of the heritage assets and the value that they hold for this and future generations. This understanding should be used to avoid or minimise conflict between their conservation and any aspect of the proposal.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. This includes above and below ground heritage assets, designated and non-designated assets, and the potential for cumulative effects on the wider historic environment.

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	5.9.25	The Secretary of State should consider the desirability of sustaining and, where appropriate, enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the contribution of their settings and the positive contribution that their conservation can make to sustainable communities, including to their quality of life, their economic vitality, and to the public's enjoyment of these assets.	The assessment concludes that during the operational phase there would be a Significant (in EIA terms) adverse residual effect upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D. The Applicant has recommended a mitigation strategy related to the potential for direct and indirect impacts on potential archaeological remains and this is presented in the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]**, the **outline Heritage Enhancement Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.22]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** The mitigation strategy involves a second phase of trial trenching in areas where geophysical survey has been carried out and not intrusively sampled, or not sampled fully, during the pre-application period. The final proposals for archaeological mitigation will be determined based on the archaeological investigation that has been carried out up to the point of submission and second phase of archaeological investigation. A Requirement of Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** will secure the provision of an archaeological mitigation strategy and heritage enhancement management plan prior to work commencing on Site. Section 5.6 of the **DAD [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out how the design of the Scheme has responded to design principles 2 and 3 (which are of most relevance to the mitigation of cultural heritage and archaeology, this includes specific consideration of the churches around the Site. The design principles are secured by the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]**
	5.9.26	The Secretary of State should also consider the desirability of the new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials, use and landscaping (for example, screen planting).	
	5.9.27	When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give great weight to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance.	As presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Setting Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Applicant has identified a significant (in EIA terms) operational phase effect upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D, which is assessed as resulting in '*less than substantial harm'* of low to mid-level upon the asset. The Applicant has also assessed the impact of the Scheme upon designated heritage assets. Minor adverse effects (i.e. not significant in EIA terms) that equate to 'less than substantial harm' are predicted upon the settings of designated heritage assets and this is detailed in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and in Paragraphs 6.8.54 to 6.8.61 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The predicted levels of 'less than substantial harm' are at the low to mid end of the scale and it is considered that there is no potential to further mitigate these effects (which are not significant in EIA terms). Paragraphs 6.8.62 to 6.8.66 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**note that upon the completion of the decommissioning the long-term effects of the operational phase on the setting of assets would be removed, with the setting of those assets restored to the current baseline condition with the exception of the elements of new green infrastructure which would be left in place at the point of decommissioning. An **oHES [EN010141/DR/7.16],** has also been produced which contains recommended measures for making a positive contribution to the historic environment. These measures are also presented in Paragraphs 6.7.33 to 6.7.36 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. There are no predicted effects upon any Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Battlefields, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens or World
	5.9.28	The Secretary of State should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving all heritage assets. Any harm or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.	
	5.9.29	Substantial harm to or loss of significance of a grade II Listed Building or a grade II Registered Park or Garden should be exceptional.	
	5.9.30	Substantial harm to or loss of significance of assets of the highest significance, including Scheduled Monuments; Protected Wreck Sites; Registered Battlefields; grade I and II* Listed Buildings; grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens; and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.	
	5.9.31	Where the proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset the Secretary of State should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm to, or loss of, significance is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all the following apply:	

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		• the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site • no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation • conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible • the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use	Heritage Sites that would be equivalent to 'substantial harm'. There are also no predicted effects upon any designated assets that would be equivalent to 'substantial harm'. In accordance with paragraph 5.9.36 of NPS EN-1, instances of less than substantial harm to a designated assets must be weighed against .the public benefits of the proposal. As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Scheme is Critical National Priority (CNP) infrastructure that would deliver substantial public benefits. This is supported by paragraph 4.2.16 of NPS EN-1 which confirms that CNP infrastructure should be treated as meeting any test which requires a clear outweighing of harm. Further to the weighting of impact against public benefits, it is also important to note that, as set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, upon the completion of the decommissioning of the Proposed Development the long-term effects of the Operational Phase on the setting of assets would be removed. The setting of those assets would be restored to the current baseline condition, except for the elements of new green infrastructure which would be retained in situ at the point of decommissioning.
	5.9.32	Where the proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.	
	5.9.33	In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.	The potential for impacts upon non-designated heritage assets has been assessed and the outcome / conclusions of the assessment are presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** The identified and potential non-designated heritage assets which may be subject to direct and indirect impacts are presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** The Applicant has recommended a mitigation strategy related to the potential for direct and indirect impacts on potential archaeological remains as is presented in the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** and summarised in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** The non-designated heritage assets which are considered subject to settings impacts are presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Setting Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2].** The only significant adverse residual effect that is are predicted upon the setting of non-designated heritage assets is to the moated site within Site D (Asset 407).The assessment confirms that the overall significance of this asset would remain intact and appreciable. The level of harm is assessed as 'less than substantial' and at the low to mid end of the scale. The policy test in NPS EN-1 specifies that this 'less than substantial' harm this 'should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. The assessment of harm vs benefits is provided in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**which concludes the benefits would clearly outweigh any disbenefits for the development. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, further archaeological investigation will also be undertaken prior to construction, as secured by the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3].***
	5.9.34	Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 5.9.30 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 5.9.32, as appropriate, considering the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme will not result in direct effects to a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site.

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	5.9.35	Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the Secretary of State should not take its deteriorated state into account in any decision.	The Applicant is not aware of any deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset. As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, there were no concerns to this effect raised during statutory consultation.
	5.9.36	When considering applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to the desirability of preserving the setting such assets and treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, the Secretary of State should give great weight to any negative effects, when weighing them against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.	As presented in in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Setting Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Applicant has identified a significant (in EIA terms) operational phase effect upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D, which is assessed as resulting in 'less than substantial harm' of low to mid-level upon the asset. The Applicant has also assessed the impact of the Scheme upon designated heritage assets. Minor adverse effects (i.e. not significant in EIA terms) that equate to 'less than substantial harm' are predicted upon the settings of designated heritage assets as is detailed in Section 3 **of ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and in Paragraphs 6.8.54 to 6.8.61 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1**]. The predicted levels of 'less than substantial harm' are at the low to mid end of the scale and it is considered that there is no potential to further mitigate these effects (which are not significant in EIA terms). Paragraphs 6.8.62 to 6.8.66 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** note that upon the completion of the decommissioning the long-term effects of the operational phase on the setting of assets would be removed, with the setting of those assets restored to the current baseline condition with the exception of the elements of new green infrastructure which would be left in place at the point of decommissioning. An **oHES [EN010141/DR/7.16]**, has also been produced which contains recommended measures for making a positive contribution to the historic environment. These measures are also presented in Paragraphs 6.7.33 to 6.7.36 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The public benefits of the proposal, including the demonstrable need for the Scheme, are set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**. In accordance with paragraph 5.9.36 of NPS EN-1, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Scheme is CNP infrastructure that would deliver substantial public benefits. This is supported by paragraph 4.2.16 of NPS EN-1 which confirms that CNP infrastructure should be treated as meeting any test which requires a clear outweighing of harm.
Landscape and Visual			
Landscape and Visual	5.10.1	The landscape and visual effects of energy projects will vary on a case by case basis according to the type of development, its location and the landscape setting of the proposed development. In this context, references to landscape should be taken as covering seascape and townscape where appropriate.	The Applicant has prepared a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition* and distinguishes between landscape effects and visual effects separately.

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	5.10.4	Landscape effects arise not only from the sensitivity of the landscape but also the nature and magnitude of change proposed by the development, whose specific siting and design make the assessment a case-by-case judgement.	
	5.10.5	Virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation.	
	5.10.6	Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate.	The approach to the siting and design of the Scheme is set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. The primary and secondary mitigation measures that have been embedded into the Scheme are set out in Section 5.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	5.10.7	National Parks, the Broads and AONBs have been confirmed by the government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and natural beauty. Each of these designated areas has specific statutory purposes. Projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. For development proposals located within designated landscapes the Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development.	As set out in Section 5.7 of **Section 5.7 of ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1].** The Site and wider study area for the LVIA is not located within a National Park or a National Landscape (formerly 'AONBs') or located within the setting of a statutory designated landscape.
	5.10.8	The duty to seek to further the purposes of nationally designated landscapes also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas which may have impacts within them. In these locations, projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. The Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further the purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development.	
	5.10.12	Outside nationally designated areas, there are local landscapes that may be highly valued locally. Where a local development document in England or a local development plan in Wales has policies based on landscape or waterscape character assessment, these should be paid particular attention. However, locally valued landscapes should not be used in themselves to refuse consent, as this may unduly restrict acceptable development.	As set out in Section 5.7 of **Section 5.7 of ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1] t**he Site and wider study area for the LVIA is not located within a local landscape designation.
	5.10.13	All proposed energy infrastructure is likely to have visual effects for many receptors around proposed sites.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents a LVIA for the Scheme and is supported by viewpoints and verifiable visualisations to inform the assessment of visual effects. The visual effects of the Scheme have been assessed from a series of eighty-three representative viewpoints located along public rights of way, other routes or land with public access, along roads, residential properties, community facilities (e.g. churches) and employment sites (place of work). Viewpoint locations were not expressly agreed with BBC, HDC and CCC in advance, on the basis that the Councils do not have landscape officers. Notwithstanding this, the viewpoints were the subject of formal EIA Scoping, were included in the PEIR and were the subject of statutory consultation. This has
	5.10.14	The Secretary of State will have to judge whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors, such as local residents, and other receptors, such as visitors to the local area, outweigh the benefits of the project.	

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			led to commentary on individual viewpoints and requests for an additional viewpoint to be assessed in the ES. The LVIA concludes that there would be residual significant adverse effects for users of the existing public right of way (PROW) network through the Site. As set out in Sections 5.7 and 5.9 the LVIA, mitigation has been identified to reduce these effects as far as possible and for many of the public rights of way, the effects would be reduced to Not Significant after 10 years, following establishment of mitigation planting. Visual effects experienced by local residents in their properties would be significant in a number of cases upon first development of the Scheme. The LVIA concludes that following establishment of mitigation planting all residential receptors would experience a reduction in the level of effect such that the residual effect after 10 years is assessed as Not Significant. No significant visual effects have been identified on users of community facilities, people using roads and people at employment sites. Measures that have been embedded into the design of the Scheme to minimise and reduce effects are set out in Section 6.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. With refence to the above, it must also be recognised that the Scheme is temporary and at the decommissioning stage (Year 40 of the Scheme) there would be no residually significant landscape or visual effects and overall the planting implemented as part of the Scheme would leave a Site which would appear similar to the baseline situation, albeit with enhanced field structure planting which would comprise a residually beneficial change to landscape character. The balancing of impacts against the benefits of the development is contained within the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** which concludes that the benefits of the scheme would clearly and demonstrably outweigh any disbenefits (including visual impact) and on that basis the grant of Development Consent should be forthcoming.
	5.10.15	Coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to visual intrusion because of the potential high visibility of development on the foreshore, on the skyline and affecting views along stretches of undeveloped coast.	The Site is located inland, and the Scheme would not affect a coastline / coastal area.
Applicant's Assessment	5.10.16	The applicant should carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment and report it in the ES, including cumulative effects (see Section 4.3). Several guides have been produced to assist in addressing landscape issues.	The Applicant has prepared a LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition* and includes an assessment of cumulative effects with other projects. The LVIA has had regard to published landscape character assessments as detailed within Section 5.6 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	5.10.17	The landscape and visual assessment should include reference to any landscape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing landscape impacts relevant to the proposed project. The applicant's assessment should also take account of any relevant policies based on these assessments in local development documents in England and local development plans in Wales.	
	5.10.18	For seascapes, applicants should consult the Seascape Character Assessment and the Marine Plan Seascape Character Assessments, and any successors to them.	The Scheme is not located within a coastal or marine management area.

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	5.10.19	The applicant should consider landscape and visual matters in the early stages of siting and design, where site choices and design principles are being established. This will allow the applicant to demonstrate in the ES how negative effects have been minimised and opportunities for creating positive benefits or enhancement have been recognised and incorporated into the design, delivery and operation of the scheme.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** provide evidence to justify the site selection, which were informed by early consideration of potential landscape and visual effects. The Design Approach Document sets out the design process that has been followed, and how this has sought to mitigate the adverse effects of the Scheme including landscape and visual effects (see Stage 2 and Stage 3 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**). It also sets out how opportunities for environmental enhancement and opportunity have been considered as part of the design process. .
	5.10.20	The assessment should include the effects on landscape components and character during construction and operation. For projects which may affect a National Park, The Broads or an AONBs the assessment should include effects on the natural beauty and special qualities of these areas'.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, Provides an assessment of the Scheme's effects on both landscape components (fabric) and landscape character during the construction, operational and decommissioning stages of the development. The effects on landscape character are summarised in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1**] and assessed in detail in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-3: Effects on Landscape Character [EN010141/DR/6.2].** The assessment considers the effects of the scheme on 5 Landscape Character Areas (LCA's), comprising LCA 1B Riseley Clay Farmland, Northern Wolds LCA, Southern Wolds LCA, LCA 1D Thurleigh Clay Farmland, LCA 4A Great Ouse Clay Valley. The Scheme would involve minimal change to landscape elements within the Site with very little vegetation removal and no change to the underlying landform upon which the Site is located. The landscape character of the Site and its immediate setting would be affected to the greatest degree within the two central character areas within the study area: LCA 1B and Southern Wolds LCA and significant landscape effects have been identified on these host character areas during the construction phase. Assessing the level of effect on the same character areas during the operational phase is more nuanced and would comprise: • On LCA 1B, the level of effect during Year 0 of operation of the Scheme would be moderate-major adverse which is significant in EIA terms. At Year 10, mitigation planting would have established such that there would be a moderate adverse level of effect which is not significant. • On Southern Wolds LCA, the level of effect during operation of the Scheme would be at Year 0 would be moderate adverse which is not significant in EIA terms. At Year 10, mitigation planting would have established such that there would be a minor-moderate adverse level of effect which remains not significant.
	5.10.21	The assessment should include the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and of the presence and operation of the project and potential impacts on views and visual amenity. This should include light pollution effects, including on dark skies, local amenity, and nature conservation.	The LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** includes an assessment of the Scheme at both the construction and operational phases. The LVIA is supported by digitally mapped zones of theoretical visibility for the Scheme, and verifiable visualisations that include photomontages. The night-time effects of the construction phase have been assessed as part of the LVIA **ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-3: Effects on Landscape Character[EN010141/DR/6.2]** and would be limited and not

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			significant with control measures set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***. The Scheme would not be routinely lit during the operational phase.
	5.10.22	The assessment should also address the landscape and visual effects of noise and light pollution, and other emissions (see Section 5.2 and Section 5.7), from construction and operational activities on residential amenity and on sensitive locations, receptors and views, how these will be minimised.	The LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** considers noise and the tranquillity of the landscape as part of the assessment of landscape effects. Residential receptors are identified as part of the assessment of visual effects. An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate pollution and emission impacts during the construction phase. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively.
	5.10.24	Applicants should consider how landscapes can be enhanced using landscape management plans, as this will help to enhance environmental assets where they contribute to landscape and townscape quality.	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** that sets out how the landscape proposals will be managed post implementation for the lifetime of the Scheme.
	5.10.25	In considering visual effects it may be helpful for applicants to draw attention, in the supporting evidence to their applications, to any examples of existing permitted infrastructure they are aware of with a similar magnitude of impact on equally sensitive receptors. This may assist the Secretary of State in judging the weight they should give to the assessed visual impacts of the proposed development.	The landscape assessment has considered the visual effects of the scheme specifically in the context of the receiving environment / study area. The weight that has been given to any landscape or visual harm has been provided in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** which sets out the overall planning balance for the Scheme.
Mitigation	5.10.26	Reducing the scale of a project can help to mitigate the visual and landscape effects of a proposed project. However, reducing the scale or otherwise amending the design of a proposed energy infrastructure project may result in a significant operational constraint and reduction in function – for example, electricity generation output. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances, where mitigation could have a very significant benefit and warrant a small reduction in function. In these circumstances, the Secretary of State may decide that the benefits of the mitigation to reduce the landscape and/or visual effects outweigh the marginal loss of function.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2] and the Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** provide evidence to justify the site selection, the scale of the development, and alternatives considered **.** **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** provide evidence to justify the site selection, the scale of the development, and alternatives considered. The LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that there would be residual significant adverse landscape and visual effects for receptors within and around the boundary of the Site. As noted at paragraph 5.10.13 of NPS EN-1, this is not uncommon for nationally significant energy infrastructure. As set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** and in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Applicant has followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and reduce effects as far as practicable in the context of the operational requirements of the development. The Applicant does not believe that there are any exceptional circumstances in relation to this project, where mitigation could have a very significant benefit and warrant a small reduction in function. As such, the Applicant does not consider there are any further reductions in the development area that are required to make the Scheme acceptable.
	5.10.27	Adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure within its development site and wider setting. The careful consideration of colours and materials will support the delivery of a well-designed scheme, as will sympathetic landscaping and management of its immediate surroundings.	

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	5.10.28	Depending on the topography of the surrounding terrain and areas of population it may be appropriate to undertake landscaping off site. For example, filling in gaps in existing tree and hedge lines may mitigate the impact when viewed from a more distant vista.	The Applicant is not proposing any off-site landscaping outside of the Order Limits.
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.10.29	The Secretary of State should take into consideration the level of detailed design which the applicant has provided and is secured in the Development Consent Order, and the extent to which design details are subject to future approvals.	The Applicant has prepared a **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** which sets out the design process that has been followed from the inception of the project, and how the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Good Design has been followed. Section 6.0 of the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** sets out how good design is secured as part of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the established design principles will be integrated with the final design post consent. A Requirement within the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** will secure the further detailed design of the Scheme, in line with outline parameters and design principles set out in the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement *[EN010141/DR/7.1]*** and the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6].***
	5.10.30	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that local authorities will have sufficient design content secured to ensure future consenting will meet landscape, visual and good design objectives.	
	5.10.34	The duty to seek to further the purposes of nationally designated landscapes also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas, which may have impacts within them. The aim should be to avoid harming the purposes of designation or to minimise adverse effects on designated landscapes, and such projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. The fact that a proposed project will be visible from within a designated area should not in itself be a reason for the Secretary of State to refuse consent.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme would not impact on a statutory designated landscape.
	5.10.35	The scale of energy projects means that they will often be visible across a very wide area. The Secretary of State should judge whether any adverse impact on the landscape would be so damaging that it is not offset by the benefits (including need) of the project.	The Applicant has prepared a LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition*. The LVIA has considered effects upon the landscape fabric of the Order Limits, upon the landscape character of the Study Area, and upon views. Effects have been assessed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. The LVIA concludes that there would be residual Significant adverse effects for users of the existing public right of way network through the Site. As set out in the LVIA, mitigation has been identified to reduce these effects as far as possible and for many of the public rights of way, the effects would be reduced to 'Not Significant' after 10 years, following establishment of mitigation planting. Visual effects experienced by local residents in their properties would also be Significant adverse in a number of cases upon first development of the Scheme. The LVIA concludes that following establishment of mitigation planting all residential receptors would experience a reduction in the level of effect such that the residual effect after 10 years is assessed as 'Not Significant'. No significant visual effects have been identified on users of community facilities, people using roads and people at employment sites. Measures that have been embedded into the design of the Scheme to minimise and reduce effects are set out in Section 6.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. It is also important to note that, as set out **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the Proposed Development is temporary and upon the completion of the
	5.10.36	In reaching a judgement, the Secretary of State should consider whether any adverse impact is temporary, such as during construction, and/or whether any adverse impact on the landscape will be capable of being reversed in a timescale that the Secretary of State considers reasonable.	

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			decommissioning of the Proposed Development the long-term effects of the Operational Phase on visual receptors would be removed. Finally, the weight that has been given to any landscape or visual harm has been addressed in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** which sets out the overall planning balance for the Scheme. The assessment concludes that the benefits of the development including the overriding need and other benefits that would be derived from the Scheme would outweigh any disbenefits including any landscape and visual effects.
	5.10.37	The Secretary of State should consider whether the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to minimise harm to the landscape, including by appropriate mitigation.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** provide evidence to justify the site selection. The Design Approach Document sets out the design process that has been followed, which has been informed by landscape design principles (amongst others), and how this has sought to mitigate the adverse effects of the Scheme. It also sets out how opportunities for environmental enhancement and opportunity have been considered as part of the overall design process. Section 6.0 of the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** sets out how good design is secured as part of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the established design principles will be integrated with the final design post consent. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out the embedded and other mitigation measures proposed in connection with the scheme. The latter includes the provisions set out within the **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13].**
	5.10.38	The Secretary of State should consider whether requirements to the consent are needed requiring the incorporation of particular design details that are in keeping with the statutory and technical requirements for landscape and visual impacts.	
Land Use, Including Open Space, Green Infrastructure, and Green Belt			
Applicant's Assessment	5.11.1	An energy infrastructure project will have a direct effect on the existing use of the proposed site and may have indirect effects on the use, or planned use, of land in the vicinity for other types of development. Given the likely locations of energy infrastructure projects there may be particular effects on open space including green and blue infrastructure.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** provide evidence to justify the site selection, The approach to site selection and the design evolution has been founded upon the key locational considerations for large scale solar development (set out in NPS EN-3) taking into account existing land use designations, local plan allocations and existing land uses on the Site. This has included the availability of previously developed land and the potential for the Scheme to impact upon existing green and blue infrastructure. The design process that has been followed has sought to mitigate and minimise the adverse effects of the Scheme. None of the land within the proposed Order Limits, or the area immediately surrounding the Order Limits, is designated as Green Belt. As such, it is not a relevent consideration for this DCO application. The Applicant has undertaken an assessment of the existing ground conditions, which is provided as **ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 10-1: Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The Stage 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment has involved a walkover of the Site, comprehensive review of historic mapping, review of any historic site investigations (noting there are none). It also
	5.11.2	Green Belts, defined in a local authority's development plan in England or regional strategic development plans in Wales, are situated around certain cities and large built-up areas. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. For further information on the purposes of Green Belt policy see chapter 13 of the NPPF, or any successor to it.	
	5.11.3	Although the re-use of previously developed land for new development can make a major contribution to sustainable development by reducing the amount of countryside and undeveloped greenfield land that needs to be used, it may not be possible for many forms of energy infrastructure	
	5.11.4	Development of land will affect soil resources, including physical loss of and damage to soil resources, through land contamination and structural damage. Indirect impacts may also arise from changes in the local water regime, organic matter content, soil biodiversity and soil process.	

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	5.11.5	Where pre-existing land contamination is being considered within a development, the objective is to ensure that the site is suitable for its intended use. Risks would require consideration in accordance with the contaminated land statutory guidance as a minimum.	includes a review of information relating to potential unexploded ordnance (UXO); environmental information from BBC, HDC and CCC, the EA and other publicly available records There is sufficient information available to characterise the risks presented in conjunction with the Scheme and define the mitigation measures that would be required that is proportionate to the contamination presented. Whilst some potential contamination sources have been identified on Site, they are not significant and are limited to the infilling of former ponds, historic gravel pits or where existing buildings / agricultural activities are being carried out. The required mitigation measures to be employed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases are set out in **outline Soil Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.9]***, as well as the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*,** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. These would be secured by a Requirement of the DCO and the details would be subject to approval by the LPAs. Through the implementation of incorporated and additional mitigation measures there would be no significant residual effects on human health, groundwater, surface water, ecology, land and livestock receptors or buildings/ground stability during the construction phase.
	5.11.8	The ES (see Section 4.3) should identify existing and proposed land uses near the project, any effects of replacing an existing development or use of the site with the proposed project or preventing a development or use on a neighbouring site from continuing. Applicants should also assess any effects of precluding a new development or use proposed in the development plan. The assessment should be proportionate to the scale of the preferred scheme and its likely impacts on such receptors. For developments on previously developed land, the applicant should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination and how it is proposed to address this.	As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** land inside the Order Limits is not specifically allocated for any use in the Local Development Plans. The Order Limits do include land associated with a number of operational farm units (agricultural use) . The arable agricultural land uses within the Order Limits would not be able to continue once the Scheme is operational. However, the Scheme will extend the areas of rough grazing pasture present within he Site by establishing it within the solar development areas. A description of the Site is provided in ES Vol 1 Chapter 1: Introduction [EN010141/DR/6.1]. As shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-5 Indicative Construction Access and Compounds [EN010141/DR/6.3]**, a number of utilities cross the Site. As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has consulted with utility undertakers and its **Works Plans *[EN010141/DR2.3]*** have made allowance for easement strips to protect the assets. Protective Provisions to safeguard utilities crossing the Site have been included within the draft DCO **[EN010141/DR/3.1]**. An assessment of the cumulative effects of the Scheme in combination with other emerging developments has been undertaken and is reported in individual assessment chapters of the environmental statement, as well as **ES Vol 1 Chapter 17: Cumulative and Intra Project Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. As noted in the response to 5.11.1 – 5.11.5 above, the Applicant has undertaken an assessment of the existing ground conditions, which is provided as **ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 10-1: Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The required mitigation measures to be employed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases are set out in **outline Soil Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.9]***, as well as the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*,** and **outline Decommissioning**

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			Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*. These would be secured by a Requirement of the DCO and the details would be subject to approval by the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). Through the implementation of incorporated and additional mitigation measures there would be no significant residual effects on human health, groundwater, surface water, ecology, land and livestock receptors or buildings/ground stability during the construction phase.
	5.11.9	Applicants will need to consult the local community on their proposals to build on existing open space, sports or recreational buildings and land. Taking account of the consultations, applicants should consider providing new or additional open space including green and blue infrastructure, sport or recreation facilities, to substitute for any losses as a result of their proposal. When considering proposals for green infrastructure, Applicant's should refer to the Green Infrastructure Framework.	As set out in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** there are a number of existing public rights of way crossing the site. The Scheme is not situated on any open space, sports or recreational buildings. and would not affect these features. It is confirmed through the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6],*** the **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010141/DR/7.7],** and shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**, that the Scheme is looking to create new areas of accessible natural green space through the Site, as well as new permissive paths (in Site B) to provide enhanced recreational access. Existing public rights of way would be retained throughout the operational phase. Reference to these works is also summarised in **S Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]**
	5.11.11	During any pre-application discussions with the applicant the LPA should identify any concerns it has about the impacts of the application on land use, having regard to the development plan and relevant applications and including, where relevant, whether it agrees with any independent assessment that the land is surplus to requirements.	As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1**] the Applicant has consulted with all three LPA's, and no concerns have been raised regarding land use.
	5.11.12	Applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5).	The Scheme has followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts on land of a higher agricultural value where possible, beginning with the site selection stage reported in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2**]. The site identification process firstly considered brownfield / previously developed land within a 15km search radius of the point of connection at the Eaton Socon Substation. This land was not availiable and the assessment ultimately concluded that that there was no Search Zone around the point of connection that was not constrained in some way, and that only by taking a balanced consideration of technical and environmental factors was it possible to select a search zone for the Site. The key determining factor in recommending the final Search Zone for the Site was that it was likely to have the most straightforward grid connection, which in turn would avoid and reduce environmental impacts, affect less landowners, and ensure that the Scheme remains commercially viable. In terms of agricultural land classification, it was established that the Site would be likely to include some areas of BMV land, but that with the evidence available, it was unlikely to contain significantly greater or lesser extents of BMV land than any other area within 15km of the point of connection. In this regard, NPS EN-3 is clear (Paragraph 2.10.29) that '*land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location*'. The above measures set out the steps taken to avoid development of BMV land as far as practicable, being the first step in the mitigation hierarchy.

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	5.11.13	Applicants should also identify any effects and seek to minimise impacts on soil health and protect and improve soil quality taking into account any mitigation measures proposed.	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Soil Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.9]*** that sets out measures which will be adopted to minimise impacts on soil health and minimise the risk of land contamination. The outline soil management plan will be developed into a detailed Soil Management Plan (SMP) once a contractor is appointed. The outline Soil Management Plan and the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** together set out embedded control measures that will be implemented during the Construction Phase and these mitigation measures have been taken into account in the assessment of impacts on soil health are identified and assessed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** confirms that there would be some significant construction phase effects in relation to temporary and permanent impacts to Grade 2 agricultural land resulting primarily from the removal of land from arable agricultural production for the duration of the Scheme, through the creation of the BESS and access tracks across the Site. The effect of permanent loss to Grade 3a land has not been assessed as significant in EIA terms. The remainder of the best and most versatile (Grade 2 and Grade 3a) land within the Site (not permanently affected by the BESS and permanent footpaths) would not be permanently adversely impacted by the Scheme and could be reverted to its existing agricultural condition upon completion, with associated benefits in relation to soil structure and resources. The assessment confirms that during the operational phase there would be significant beneficial effects to soil resources due to the land being rested from arable rotation and an improvement in soil functions by increasing ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, a reduction in water run-off and siltation compared to periods where soils would be bare during arable rotation.
	5.11.14	Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Management Plan which could help minimise potential land contamination. The sustainable reuse of soils needs to be carefully considered in line with good practice guidance where large quantities of soils are surplus to requirements or are affected by contamination.	
	5.11.15	Developments should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing developments from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.	An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate any potential direct or indirect impacts from pollution during the construction phase. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively. With specific reference to 5.11.16, as set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Air Quality [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the operational phase air quality effects of the Scheme were scoped out of the assessment on the basis that they would be so small as to not require assessment. The assessment addresses the construction and decommissioning phase effects of dust, on-road vehicle exhaust emissions and emissions from non-road mobile machinery. The chapter concludes that through the implementation of embedded dust mitigation measures (included within the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3**] there would be no significant effects in terms dust, on-road vehicle exhaust emissions and emissions from non-road mobile machinery. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1],** to manage the risk of surface water flooding across the Site and to ensure that runoff rates are not increased, which could affect both on and off-site flooding, an **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]** has been developed. The oSWMP will ensure a neutral or beneficial effect on on-site and third-party surface water flood risks. The ES chapter also confirms that the Scheme would result in beneficial effects on water quality by changing the use of the land from active arable use and the associated use of pesticide and fertiliser that comes with intensive farming.
	5.11.16	Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.	
	5.11.17	Applicants should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use, taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents an assessment of the Scheme on ground conditions and considers the risks of land instability and contamination. The

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			assessment confirms that as a consequence of implementing the embedded and additional mitigation measures set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6] (which would all be secured via a DCO requirement)*** the scheme would not give rise to significant residual effects on human health, controlled waters, ecological receptors or buildings/ground stability during any phase of the Scheme (construction, operation and decommissioning).
	5.11.18	For developments on previously developed land, applicants should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination, and where contamination is present, applicants should consider opportunities for remediation where possible. It is important to do this as early as possible as part of engagement with the relevant bodies before the official pre-application stage.	The Site does not include previously developed land. As set out above**, ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents an assessment of the Scheme on ground conditions and considers the risks of land instability and contamination. Preparation of the assessment has taken into account consultation responses from BBC, HDC, CCC and the Environment Agency (EA). **ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that, through the implementation of embedded and additional mitigation measures, there would be no significant residual effects on human health, controlled waters, ecological receptors or buildings/ground stability during the construction, operational or decommissioning phases.
	5.11.19	Applicants should safeguard any mineral resources on the proposed site as far as possible, taking into account the long-term potential of the land use after any future decommissioning has taken place.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, whilst there are various mineral reserves within the order limits there are a number of reasons why the Scheme remains acceptable.in the context of prevailing mineral safeguarding policy, which comprise: 1. It is apparent from a review of the adopted minerals and waste plans that there is currently no strategy to seek extraction of any of the mineral reserves / mineral safeguarding areas within the Order Limits. 2. The mineral reserves are large and are not wholly within the order limits, thus a proportion of the safeguarded mineral resource would remain availiable for extraction for the duration of the Scheme. 3. The Scheme would comprise temporary development and each phase would be decommissioned after 40 years. Any impacts caused by the Scheme are considered reversible and temporary and, as such, the minerals contained within the Order Limits would not be permanently sterilised and, post decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Scheme would not result in the sterilisation of any mineral reserves. The three local planning authorities have all reviewed the land and soils chapter at the PEIR stage and none have provided any comment on the sterilisation of minerals. As such, at this stage it is assumed they do not have any concerns on the matter.
	5.11.20	The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Applicants should therefore determine whether their proposal, or any part of it, is within an established Green Belt and if it is, whether their proposal may be inappropriate development within the meaning of Green Belt policy (see paragraph 5.11.36 below).	The Scheme and the proposed Order Limits are not within the Green Belt.

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	5.11.21	However, infilling or redevelopment of major developed sites in the Green Belt, if identified as such by the local planning authority, may be suitable for energy infrastructure. It may help to secure jobs and prosperity without further prejudicing the Green Belt or offer the opportunity for environmental improvement. Applicants should refer to relevant criteria on such developments in Green Belts.	
	5.11.22	Moreover an applicant may be able to demonstrate that particular energy infrastructure, such as an underground pipeline, may be considered an "engineering operation" and regarded as not inappropriate in Green Belt. This is provided it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of Green Belt designation. It may also be possible for an applicant to show that the physical characteristics of a proposed overhead line in a particular location would not have so harmful an impact as to conflict with the purposes of Green Belt designation, or with other protections of rural landscape.	
Mitigation	5.11.23	Although in the case of most energy infrastructure there may be little that can be done to mitigate the direct effects of an energy project on the existing use of the proposed site (assuming that some of that use can still be retained post project construction) applicants should nevertheless seek to minimise these effects and the effects on existing or planned uses near the site by the application of good design principles, including the layout of the project and the protection of soils during construction.	The existing land use of the Site is predominantly a mixture of arable agricultural land, grazing pasture, and some existing areas of woodland. The arable agricultural land uses within the Order Limits would not be able to continue once the Scheme is operational. However, the Scheme will extend the areas of rough grazing pasture present within the Site by establishing it within the solar development areas. As set out in the **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.13]***, the Applicant is proposing to continue grazing of the grasslands within the solar fenceline. The Scheme would not prevent the existing farms located within or partly within the Order Limits from continuing to operate and the agricultural use will be able to continue across the majority of the Site following decommissioning As evidenced in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1],** by that point the soils quality across the site will be better than it is at present. As shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-5 Indicative Construction Access and Compounds [EN010141/DR/6.3]**, a number of utilities cross the Site. As set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has consulted with utility undertakers and its **Works Plans *[EN010141/DR/2.3]*** have made allowance for easement strips to protect the assets. Protective Provisions to safeguard utilities crossing the Site have also been included within the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**. The Applicant has prepared an **outline Soil Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.9]** that sets out measures which will be adopted to minimise impacts on soil health and minimise the risk of land contamination. The outline Soil Management Plan and the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]** together set out embedded control measures that will be implemented during the construction phase and are secured by a Requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**.
	5.11.24	Where green infrastructure is affected, the Secretary of State should consider imposing requirements to ensure the functionality and connectivity of the green infrastructure network is maintained in the vicinity of the development and that any necessary works are undertaken, where possible, to mitigate any adverse impact and, where appropriate, to improve that network and other areas of open space including appropriate access to National Trails and other public rights of way and new coastal access routes.	As set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** and shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**, the Scheme maintains the functionality and connectivity of the existing green infrastructure network. The Scheme includes new areas of accessible natural green space through the Site, as well as new permissive paths (in Site B) to provide enhanced recreational access. Existing public rights of way would be retained throughout the operational phase.

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	5.11.25	The Secretary of State should also consider whether any adverse effect on green infrastructure and other forms of open space is adequately mitigated or compensated by means of any planning obligations, for example exchange land and provide for appropriate management and maintenance agreements. Any exchange land should be at least as good in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality, and accessibility.	The impacts of the Scheme on green infrastructure and the associated mitigation and compensation, is dealt with in a number of ES chapters, as follows: • Impacts on public rights of way are considered in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1], ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1]** with mitigation set out in the **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.14]** • Impacts on Habitats and networks are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1],** The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** which sets out how existing and proposed green infrastructure will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme. • watercourses and drainage networks are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** • soils resources are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** Requirements will be proposed within the **draft Development Consent Order [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the delivery of the relevant green infrastructure mitigation / enhancement measures. There are no designated open spaces or common land within the proposed Order Limits. The outcome of the aforementioned assessment work has been factored into design and as set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** and the o**utline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.14],** the Scheme would result in minimal loss of green infrastructure and where possible significant gains across the Site. Sections 131 and 132 of the Planning Act 2008 do not apply to the Scheme.
	5.11.26	Alternatively, where sections 131 and 132 of the Planning Act 2008 apply, replacement land provided under those sections will need to conform to the requirements of those sections.	
	5.11.27	Existing trees and woodlands should be retained wherever possible. In the EIP, the Government committed to increase the tree canopy and woodland cover to 16.5% of total land area of England by 2050. The applicant should assess the impacts on, and loss of, all trees and woodlands within the project boundary and develop mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts and any risk of net deforestation as a result of the scheme. Mitigation may include, but is not limited to, the use of buffers to enhance resilience, improvements to connectivity, and improved woodland management. Where woodland loss is unavoidable, compensation schemes will be required, and the long-term management and maintenance of newly planted trees should be secured.	The Applicant has undertaken an Arboricultural Assessment **ES Vol 2 Appendix 2-2: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** of the existing trees and woodlands within the Site. This confirms that the construction of the Scheme would only necessitate the loss of two trees. It also confirms that a further 12 trees have been identified which are in very poor condition and merit removal. Mitigation measures to avoid and minimise adverse effects to trees and woodland are set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** that sets out how existing and proposed trees and woodland will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme. Set against the very small loss of trees is the extensive landscape and biodiversity enhancement proposals that are proposed in connection with the Scheme. These proposals are set out in the **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]** and **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/6.3].**

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	5.11.28	Where a proposed development has an impact upon a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA), the Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate mitigation measures have been put in place to safeguard mineral resources.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, whilst there are various mineral reserves within the order limits there are a number of reasons why the Scheme remains acceptable.in the context of prevailing mineral safeguarding policy, they comprise: • It is apparent from a review of the adopted minerals and waste plans that there is currently no strategy to seek extraction of any of the mineral reserves / mineral safeguarding areas within the Order Limits. • The mineral reserves are large and are not wholly within the order limits, thus a proportion of the safeguarded mineral resource would remain availiable for the duration of the Scheme • The Scheme would comprise temporary development and each phase would be decommissioned after 40 years. Any impacts caused by the Scheme are considered reversible and temporary and as such, the minerals contained within the Order Limits would not be permanently sterilised and, post decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Scheme would not result in the sterilisation of any mineral reserves. The three local planning authorities have all reviewed the land and soils chapter at the PEIR stage and none have provided any comment on the sterilisation of minerals. As such, at this stage it is assumed they do not have any concerns on the matter.
	5.11.29	Where a project has a sterilising effect on land use (for example in some cases under transmission lines) there may be scope for this to be mitigated through, for example, using or incorporating the land for nature conservation or wildlife corridors or for parking and storage in employment areas.	
	5.11.30	Public Rights of way, National Trails, and other rights of access to land are important recreational facilities for example for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The Secretary of State should expect applicants to take appropriate mitigation measures to address adverse effects on coastal access, National Trails, other rights of way and open access land and, where appropriate, to consider what opportunities there may be to improve or create new access. In considering revisions to an existing right of way, consideration should be given to the use, character, attractiveness, and convenience of the right of way.	As set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** and shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**, the Scheme maintains the functionality and connectivity of the existing green infrastructure network. The Scheme includes new areas of accessible natural green space throughout the Site, as well as new permissive paths (in Site B) to provide enhanced recreational access. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** PROW have been integrated into the masterplan for the Scheme, as shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**. This confirms that all PROW's will be retained in their entirety, with other permissive paths being created as part of the Scheme. There would be temporary diversions and closures of public rights of way during the construction phase. PROWs would be managed in accordance with the **outline Public Right of Way Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.8]***, which will be developed into a detailed Public Right of Way Management Plan post consent, and is secured by a requirement of the DCO. The main impact of the Scheme on PROW would be visual effects. The Landscape and Visual Assessment **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** confirms that at Year 0 there would be significant visual effects on users of some rights of way located in proximity to the Scheme. The number of significant visual effects on users of footpaths within the Study Area would notably reduce by Year 10, following the establishment of landscape mitigation, although some significant long-term visual effects would remain beyond this period. These effects would be on a small number of rights of way which cross into the Site or are directly adjacent to it.
	5.11.31	The Secretary of State should consider whether the mitigation measures put forward by an applicant are acceptable and whether requirements or other provisions in respect of these measures should be included in any grant of development consent.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.11.32	The Secretary of State should not grant consent for development on existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land unless an assessment has been undertaken either by the local authority or independently, which has shown the open space or the buildings and land to be surplus to requirements or the Secretary of State determines that the benefits of the project (including need), outweigh the potential loss of such facilities, taking into account any positive proposals made by the applicant to provide new, improved or compensatory land or facilities.	As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** the Scheme would not result in the loss of existing open space, playing fields or other sports, recreational or community facilities.

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	5.11.33	The loss of playing fields should only be allowed where applicants can demonstrate that they will be replaced with facilities of equivalent or better quantity or quality in a suitable location.	
	5.11.34	The Secretary of State should ensure that applicants do not site their scheme on the best and most versatile agricultural land without justification. Where schemes are to be sited on best and most versatile agricultural land the Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of that land. Where development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.	The Scheme has followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts on land of a higher agricultural value where possible, beginning with the site selection stage reported in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2**]. The site identification exercise firstly considered brownfield / previously developed land within a 15km search radius of the point of connection at the Eaton Socon Substation. This land was not availiable, and the assessment ultimately concluded that that there was no Search Zone around the point of connection that was not constrained in some way, and that only by taking a balanced consideration of technical and environmental factors was it possible to select a search zone for the Site. The key determining factor in recommending the final Search Zone for the Site was that it was likely to have the most straightforward grid connection, which in turn would avoid and reduce environmental impacts, affect less landowners, and ensure that the Scheme remains commercially viable. In terms of agricultural land classification, it was established that the Site would be likely to include some areas of BMV land, but that with the evidence available it was unlikely to contain significantly greater or lesser extents of BMV land than any other area within 15km of the point of connection. In this context, NPS EN-3 is clear (Paragraph 2.10.29) that '*land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location*'. The above measures set out the steps taken to avoid development of BMV land as far as practicable, being the first step in the mitigation hierarchy. The ALC distribution across the Site is reported in Table 13.8 of **ES Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which confirms that the Site is made up of: i. Grade 2 - 164.0 ha (21.2%); ii. Grade 3a - 349.5 ha (45.2%); and iii. Grade 3b - 182.4 ha (23.6%). There are also small areas of the Site classed as ungraded and non-agricultural, with ungraded land treated as Grade 2 for environmental assessment purposes. In total, and as set out in **ES Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the Scheme would only result in permanent adverse impact to approximately 5.76 hectares of best and most versatile land. The remainder of the best and most versatile (Grade 2 and Grade 3a) land within the Site would not be permanently adversely impacted by the Scheme and could be easily reverted to its existing agricultural condition upon completion, with anticipated benefits in relation to soil structure and resources. The need for and benefits of the Scheme are well established in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, and it is considered that the substantial positive weight that should be afforded to the Scheme clearly outweighs the limited negative weight that should be given to the harm to agricultural land and soils. This is consistent with recent SoS decisions on other solar NSIPs that have resulted in the temporary and permanent loss of BMV land.
	5.11.35	In considering the impact on maintaining coastal recreation sites and features, the Secretary of State should expect applicants to have taken advantage of opportunities to maintain and enhance access to the coast. In doing so the Secretary of State should consider the implications for development of the creation of a continuous signed and	The Site is located inland and would not affect coastal recreation sites and features.

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		managed route around the coast, as provided for in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.	
	5.11.36	When located in the Green Belt, energy infrastructure projects may comprise 'inappropriate development'. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. The NPPF makes clear that most new building is inappropriate in Green Belt and should be refused permission unless in very special circumstances.	The Scheme and Order Limits are not located in the Green Belt.
	5.11.37	Very special circumstances are not defined in national planning policy as it is for the individual decision maker to assess each case on its merits and give relevant circumstances their due weight. However, when considering any planning application affecting Green Belt land, the Secretary of State should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt when considering any application for such development, while taking account, in relation to renewable and linear infrastructure, of the extent to which its physical characteristics are such that it has limited or no impact on the fundamental purposes of Green Belt designation. Very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewables and other low carbon sources.	
	5.11.38	In England, Local Green Spaces may be designated locally in Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. These enjoy the same protection as Green Belt in England and the Secretary of State should adopt a similar approach.	As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** the Scheme would not result in the loss of existing open space (including local green space designations), playing fields or other sports, recreational or community facilities.
Noise and Vibration			
Noise and Vibration	5.12.1	Excessive noise can have wide-ranging impacts on the quality of human life and health such as annoyance, sleep disturbance, cardiovascular disease and mental ill-health. It can also have an impact on the environment and the use and enjoyment of areas of value such as quiet places and areas with high landscape quality	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Scheme regarding noise and vibration. The ES Chapter includes an assessment of noise and vibration impacts on human and ecological receptors. The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment *[EN010141/DR/5.7]*** has had regard to the impacts and effects identified within the noise and vibration assessment.
	5.12.4	Noise resulting from a proposed development can also have adverse impacts on wildlife and biodiversity. Noise effects of the proposed development on ecological receptors should be assessed by the Secretary of State in accordance with the Biodiversity and Geological Conservation section of this NPS at Section 5.4. This should consider underwater noise and vibration especially for marine developments. Underwater noise can be a significant issue in the marine environment, particularly in regard to energy production.	
	5.12.5	Factors that will determine the likely noise impact of a proposed development include: • the inherent operational noise from the proposed development, and its characteristics • the proximity of the proposed development to noise sensitive premises (including residential properties, schools and hospitals) and noise sensitive areas (including certain parks and open spaces)	

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		• the proximity of the proposed development to quiet places and other areas that are particularly valued for their soundscape or landscape quality • the proximity of the proposed development to sites where noise may have an adverse impact on protected species or other wildlife, including migratory species • the potential presence of unexploded ordnance on the seabed	

Applicant's Assessment	5.12.6	Where noise impacts are likely to arise from the proposed development, the applicant should include the following in the noise assessment:
		• a description of the noise generating aspects of the development proposal leading to noise impacts, including the identification of any distinctive tonal characteristics, if the noise is impulsive, whether the noise contains particular high or low frequency content or any temporal characteristics of the noise
		• identification of noise sensitive receptors and noise sensitive areas that may be affected
		• the characteristics of the existing noise environment
		• a prediction of how the noise environment will change with the proposed development
		  ○ in the shorter term, such as during the construction period
		  ○ in the longer term, during the operating life of the infrastructure
		  ○ at particular times of the day, evening and night (and weekends) as appropriate, and at different times of year
		• an assessment of the effect of predicted changes in the noise environment on any noise-sensitive receptors, including an assessment of any likely impact on health and quality of life / well-being where appropriate, particularly among those disadvantaged by other factors who are often disproportionately affected by noise-sensitive areas
		• if likely to cause disturbance, an assessment of the effect of underwater or subterranean noise
		• all reasonable steps taken to mitigate and minimise potential adverse effects on health and quality of life
			ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1] presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Scheme regarding noise and vibration. The scope of the assessment was agreed as part of the EIA Scoping exercise (see **ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-2: EIA Scoping Opinion [EN010141/DR/6.2**] and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-3: EIA Scoping Opinion Response Matrix [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and in consultation with the environmental Protection officers within BBC, HDC and CCC **ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-4: Summary of Consultation [EN010141/DR/6.2**].
			ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1] concludes that the Scheme has been designed to operate such that it complies with all appropriate and relevant noise standards and guidance.

	5.12.7	The nature and extent of the noise assessment should be proportionate to the likely noise impact.	
	5.12.8	Applicants should consider the noise impact of ancillary activities associated with the development, such as increased road and rail traffic movements, or other forms of transportation.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]** considers the noise and vibration effects of construction activities, and ancillary activities such as increased traffic movements through the construction period. The assessment concludes that these effects would be negligible to slight and not significant.
	5.12.9	Operational noise, with respect to human receptors, should be assessed using the principles of the relevant British Standards and other guidance. Further information on assessment of particular noise sources may be contained in the technology specific NPSs. In particular, for renewables (EN-3) and electricity networks (EN-5) there is assessment	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that the Scheme has been designed to operate such that it complies with all appropriate and relevant noise standards and guidance, which includes the relevant British Standards.

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		guidance for specific features of those technologies. For the prediction, assessment and management of construction noise, reference should be made to any relevant British Standards and other guidance which also give examples of mitigation strategies.	
	5.12.10	Some noise impacts will be controlled through environmental permits and parallel tracking is encouraged where noise impacts determined by an environmental permit interface with planning issues (i.e. physical design and location of development). The applicant should consult the EA and/or the SNCB, and other relevant bodies, such the MMO or NRW, as necessary, and in particular regarding assessment of noise on protected species or other wildlife. The results of any noise surveys and predictions may inform the ecological assessment. The seasonality of potentially affected species in nearby sites may also need to be considered.	**The Other Consents and Licences Statement *[EN010141/DR/5.5]*** outlines the additional consents, licenses, and permits that may be necessary for carrying out the works authorised under the DCO. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that the Scheme has been designed to operate such that it complies with all appropriate and relevant noise standards and guidance. The Noise Assessment includes an assessment of noise and vibration impacts on ecological receptors. The **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment *[EN010141/DR/5.3]*** has also had regard to the impacts and effects identified within the Noise Assessment. The Applicant has consulted with Natural England and the Environment Agency, as set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**.
	5.12.12	Applicants should submit a detailed impact assessment and mitigation plan as part of any development plan, including the use of noise mitigation and noise abatement technologies during construction and operation.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides a detailed assessment of noise and summarises the mitigation measures that have been embedded into the project to reduce the impacts of the Scheme. More detail on the measures is provided in the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]**, and the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** which are secured by Requirements of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**. An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate noise impacts during the construction phase. These measures include but are not limited to controlling construction hours of work, maintenance of equipment, and good site management.
Mitigation	5.12.13	The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed both for operational and construction noise over and above any which may form part of the project application. In doing so the Secretary of State may wish to impose mitigation measures. Any such mitigation measures should take account of the NPPF or any successor to it and the Planning Practice Guidance on Noise.	
	5.12.14	Mitigation measures may include one or more of the following: • engineering: reducing the noise generated at source and/or containing the noise generated • lay-out: where possible, optimising the distance between the source and noise-sensitive receptors and/or incorporating good design to minimise noise transmission through the use of screening by natural or purpose-built barriers, or other buildings • administrative: using planning conditions/obligations to restrict activities allowed on the site at certain times and/or specifying permissible noise limits/noise levels, differentiating as appropriate between different times of day, such as evenings and late at night, and taking into account seasonality of wildlife in nearby designated sites • insulation: mitigating the impact on areas likely to be affected by noise including through noise insulation when the impact is on a building.	
	5.12.15	The project should demonstrate good design through selection of the quietest or most acceptable cost-effective plant available; containment of noise within buildings wherever possible, taking into account any other adverse impacts that such containment might cause (e.g. on landscape and visual impacts; optimisation of plant layout to minimise	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme is not located in a tranquil or noise sensitive area. It is nevertheless within a largely rural area where there are limited existing sources of noise. This has led to the promotion of a series of mitigation measures which have been embedded into each phase of the development to ensure the noise contribution from the Scheme would not lead to significant adverse impacts on receptors. The specific noise mitigation

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		noise emissions; and, where possible, the use of landscaping, bunds or noise barriers to reduce noise transmission).	measures are set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]; outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]; outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5];** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6].** The Applicant's approach to design in relation to noise is set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***.
	5.12.16	A development must be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements for noise. Due regard must be given to the relevant sections of the Noise Policy Statement for England, the NPPF, and the government's associated planning guidance on noise. In Wales the relevant policy will be PPW and the TANs, as well as the Welsh Government's Noise and Soundscape Action Plan.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, concludes that the Scheme has been designed to operate such that it complies with all appropriate and relevant noise standards and guidance, which includes the Noise Policy Statement for England, the NPPF, and associated planning guidance. The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** provides an assessment of the Scheme in relation to the aforementioned planning policies and guidance.
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.12.17	The Secretary of State should not grant development consent unless they are satisfied that the proposals will meet the following aims, through the effective management and control of noise: • avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise • mitigate and minimise other adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise • where possible, contribute to improvements to health and quality of life through the effective management and control of noise	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, concludes that the Scheme will result in no significant noise effects, and that the Scheme has been designed to operate such that it complies with all appropriate and relevant noise standards and guidance. An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate noise impacts during the construction phase and is secured by a Requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**. Following commissioning of the Scheme, the site generated noise levels would be monitored under load conditions to show compliance with agreed noise limits. This is included in the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.11]**. The final OEMP would be secured by a DCO Requirement. This will ensure that there would be no significant adverse effects arising from the operation of the Scheme.
	5.12.18	When preparing the Development Consent Order, the Secretary of State should consider including measurable requirements or specifying the mitigation measures to be put in place to ensure that noise levels do not exceed any limits specified in the development consent. These requirements or mitigation measures may apply to the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the energy infrastructure development.	
Socio-Economic Impacts			
Applicant's Assessment	5.13.2	Where the project is likely to have socio-economic impacts at local or regional levels, the applicant should undertake and include in their application an assessment of these impacts as part of the ES (see Section 4.3).	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant socio-economic effects of the Scheme. The scope of the ES Chapter was refined through pre-application engagement with the local planning authorities, statutory environmental bodies, and other stakeholders as reported in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**.
	5.13.3	The applicant is strongly encouraged to engage with relevant local authorities during early stages of project development so that the applicant can gain a better understanding of local or regional issues and opportunities.	
	5.13.4	The applicant's assessment should consider all relevant socio-economic impacts, which may include: • the creation of jobs and training opportunities. Applicants may wish to provide information on the sustainability of the jobs created, including where they will help to develop the skills needed for the UK's transition to Net Zero	

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		• the contribution to the development of low-carbon industries at the local and regional level as well as nationally • the provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, including the provision of educational and visitor facilities • any indirect beneficial impacts for the region hosting the infrastructure, in particular in relation to use of local support services and supply chains • effects (positive and negative) on tourism and other users of the area impacted • the impact of a changing influx of workers during the different construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the energy infrastructure. This could change the local population dynamics and could alter the demand for services and facilities in the settlements nearest to the construction work (including community facilities and physical infrastructure such as energy, water, transport and waste). There could also be effects on social cohesion depending on how populations and service provision change as a result of the development • cumulative effects - if development consent were to be granted for a number of projects within a region and these were developed in a similar timeframe, there could be some short-term negative effects, for example a potential shortage of construction workers to meet the needs of other industries and major projects within the region	
	5.13.5	Applicants should describe the existing socio-economic conditions in the areas surrounding the proposed development and should also refer to how the development's socio-economic impacts correlate with local planning policies.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out the existing baseline for the assessment of socio-economic and tourism conditions in the areas within and surrounding the Order Limits. This includes population and deprivation; employment; local economy and labour market; local services; community facilities; visitor attractions and visitor accommodation. The ES Chapter also considers local planning policy as does this PCD.
	5.13.6	Socio-economic impacts may be linked to other impacts, for example visual impacts considered in Section 5.10 but may also have an impact on tourism and local businesses. Applicants are encouraged, where possible, to demonstrate that local suppliers have been considered in any supply chain.	The potential for inter-project cumulative effects have been assessed and are set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 17: Cumulative and Intra Project Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The Applicant has prepared an **outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.11]*** that considers accommodation requirements and sets how local supply chains would be engaged to maximise local economic benefits.
	5.13.7	Applicants should consider developing accommodation strategies where appropriate, especially during construction and decommissioning phases, that would include the need to provide temporary accommodation for construction workers if required.	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.11]*** that sets how local supply chains could be engaged to maximise local economic benefits.
Mitigation	5.13.8	The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are necessary to mitigate any adverse socio-economic impacts of the development. For example, high quality design can improve the visual and environmental experience for visitors and the local community alike.	Measures to mitigate adverse impacts to tourism and recreation receptors are set out in Section 14.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1].** They are proposed to reduce other construction and operational effects (including those relating to noise, air quality, transport and landscape), which in turn will mitigate the effects on businesses, the community, and visitors as well as the local community and existing facilities from a socio-economic and development land perspective.

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			The Scheme includes new areas of accessible natural green space through the Site, as well as new permissive paths (in Site B) to provide enhanced recreational access. Existing public rights of way would be retained throughout the operational phase. There would be temporary diversions and closures of public rights of way during the construction phase. Public rights of way would be managed in accordance with the **outline Public Right of Way Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.8]***, which will be developed into a detailed Public Right of Way Management Plan post consent, and is secured by a Requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**. Measures to manage construction traffic are set out in the **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.4]***. The **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** commits to the establishment of a Community Liaison Group which will liaise with local businesses, residents and the town council to keep them informed of progress, and to allow them to raise any queries or concerns. Finally, the Applicant has also prepared an **outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.11]*** that sets how local supply chains could be engaged to maximise local economic benefits.
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.13.9	The Secretary of State should have regard to the potential socio-economic impacts of new energy infrastructure identified by the applicant and from any other sources that the Secretary of State considers to be both relevant and important to its decision.	The assessment of socio-economic and tourism impacts is set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1] .** The assessment concludes that there would be no likely significant adverse effects as a result of the Scheme.
	5.13.10	The Secretary of State may conclude that limited weight is to be given to assertions of socio-economic impacts that are not supported by evidence (particularly in view of the need for energy infrastructure as set out in this NPS).	
	5.13.11	The Secretary of State should consider any relevant positive provisions the applicant has made or is proposing to make to mitigate impacts (for example through planning obligations) and any legacy benefits that may arise as well as any options for phasing development in relation to the socio-economic impacts.	Mitigation that the Applicant has embedded into the Scheme is set out above in the response to paragraph 5.13.8 of NPS EN-1. The measures to increase access across the Site, as well as providing measures to understand and appreciate the natural and historic heritage of the Site will make a positive contribution to the local community, as described within the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. The Applicant is also proposing a Community Benefit Fund as part of the proposals. As this is not provided as mitigation for the Scheme, or as a planning benefit of the project, it sits outside of the planning balance as set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.
	5.13.12	The Secretary of State may wish to include a requirement that specifies the approval by the local authority of an employment and skills plan detailing arrangements to promote local employment and skills development opportunities, including apprenticeships, education, engagement with local schools and colleges and training programmes to be enacted.	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.11]*** that sets how local supply chains could be engaged to maximise local economic benefits. This will be developed into a detailed Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan post consent, and is secured by a Requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**.
Traffic and Transport			

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Applicant's Assessment	5.14.5	If a project is likely to have significant transport implications, the applicant's ES (see Section 4.3) should include a transport appraisal. The DfT's (TAG) and Welsh Governments WelTAG provides guidance on modelling and assessing the impacts of transport schemes.	**ES Vol 1 Appendix 9-1: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1]** has been produced as part of the ES. It has been prepared in accordance with DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance. The Applicant has also prepared a stand-alone Transport Assessment (TA) **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** which has been submitted as part of the wider application for development consent.
	5.14.6	National Highways and Highways Authorities are statutory consultees on NSIP applications including energy infrastructure where it is expected to affect the strategic road network and / or have an impact on the local road network. Applicants should consult with National Highways and Highways Authorities as appropriate on the assessment and mitigation to inform the application to be submitted.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Appendix 9-1: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1],** the **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has consulted both National Highways and the Local Highway Authorities regarding the Scheme both during the EIA Scoping exercise and as part of the statutory consultation. This has included agreement on the scope of both the ES chapter and the TA.
	5.14.7	The applicant should prepare a travel plan including demand management and monitoring measures to mitigate transport impacts. The applicant should also provide details of proposed measures to improve access by active, public and shared transport to: • reduce the need for parking associated with the proposal • contribute to decarbonisation of the transport network • improve user travel options by offering genuine modal choice	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** sets out the access arrangements that would be put in place for the construction and operational phases of the Scheme. The anticipated traffic generation is provided, with staff trips expected to be made by a combination of cars and minibuses. Temporary parking would be provided within the Order Limits for the duration of the construction phase. An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. A requirement of the draft **DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** will ensure these measures are developed in detail and complied with.
	5.14.8	The assessment should also consider any possible disruption to services and infrastructure (such as road, rail and airports).	
	5.14.9	If additional transport infrastructure is needed or proposed, it should always include good quality walking, wheeling and cycle routes, and associated facilities (changing/storage etc.) needed to enhance active transport provision.	The Scheme would not require additional transport infrastructure. The Scheme includes for the improvement of existing footpaths and cycle routes, creation of new permissive paths (in Site B) for walking and cycling, provision of wayfinding signage and information, and interpretative material. These measures are set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** and **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]***. Some localised, temporary PRoW diversions are expected to be required, as described within the outline **Public Right of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.8]**
	5.14.10	Applicants should discuss with network providers the possibility of co-funding by government for any third-party benefits. Guidance has been issued which explains the circumstances where this may be possible, although the government cannot guarantee in advance that funding will be available for any given uncommitted scheme at any specified time.	
Mitigation	5.14.11	Where mitigation is needed, possible demand management measures must be considered. This could include identifying opportunities to: • reduce the need to travel by consolidating trips • locate development in areas already accessible by active travel and public transport • provide opportunities for shared mobility • re-mode by shifting travel to a sustainable mode that is more beneficial to the network • retime travel outside of the known peak times • reroute to use parts of the network that are less busy	An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase.

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	5.14.12	If feasible and operationally reasonable, such mitigation should be required, before considering requirements for the provision of new inland transport infrastructure to deal with remaining transport impacts. All stages of the project should support and encourage a modal shift of freight from road to more environmentally sustainable alternatives, such as rail, cargo bike, maritime and inland waterways, as well as making appropriate provision for and infrastructure needed to support the use of alternative fuels including charging for electric vehicles.	The Scheme would not require additional transport infrastructure.
	5.14.13	Regard should always be given to the needs of freight at all stages in the construction and operation of the development including the need to provide appropriate facilities for HGV drivers as appropriate.	An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. This includes plans to provide information packs and site inductions to all contractors/drivers and HGV management measures, including details of timing restrictions, parking and traffic marshalling arrangements. Parking and welfare facilities would be provided on Site within the temporary construction compounds and would be used by HGV drivers as required. Forecast HGV movements during the construction phase are set out within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2].** This confirms that the residual impact of the Scheme would not be severe.
	5.14.14	The Secretary of State may attach requirements to a consent where there is likely to be substantial HGV traffic that: • control numbers of HGV movements to and from the site in a specified period during its construction and possibly on the routing of such movements • make sufficient provision for HGV parking, and associated high quality drive facilities either on the site or at dedicated facilities elsewhere, to support driver welfare, avoid 'overspill' parking on public roads, prolonged queuing on approach roads and uncontrolled on-street HGV parking in normal operating conditions • ensure satisfactory arrangements for reasonably foreseeable abnormal disruption, in consultation with network providers and the responsible police force.	
	5.14.15	The Secretary of State should have regard to the cost-effectiveness of demand management measures compared to new transport infrastructure, as well as the aim to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development when considering mitigation measures.	An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. The Scheme would not require the construction of additional transport infrastructure.
	5.14.16	Applicants should consider the DfT policy guidance "Water Preferred Policy Guidelines for the movement of abnormal indivisible loads" when preparing their application.	Delivery of abnormal indivisible loads via water is not practical given the lack of a route by water from any port.. AIL movements are set out in the **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2].**
	5.14.17	If an applicant suggests that the costs of meeting any obligations or requirements would make the proposal economically unviable this should not in itself justify the relaxation by the Secretary of State of any obligations or requirements needed to secure the mitigation.	The mitigation measures set out in the **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** are economically viable, and feasible to deliver. The outline CTMP will be developed into a detailed CTMP prior to construction and is secured by a requirement of the DCO.
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.14.18	A new energy NSIP may give rise to substantial impacts on the surrounding transport infrastructure and the Secretary of State should therefore ensure that the applicant has sought to mitigate these impacts, including during the construction phase of the development and by enhancing active, public and shared transport provision and accessibility.	**ES Vol 1 Appendix 9-1: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1]** confirms that the anticipated effect of the Scheme during the construction phase regarding Traffic and Transport would be negligible or minor in the context of Driver Delay, Accidents & Safety, Pedestrian Delay, Severance, NMU Amenity and Fear & Intimidation, and neutral in relation to public transport. The residual effects are therefore negligible, and not significant in EIA terms.

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	5.14.19	Where the proposed mitigation measures are insufficient to reduce the impact on the transport infrastructure to acceptable levels, the Secretary of State should consider requirements to mitigate adverse impacts on transport networks arising from the development, as set out below.	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** concludes that the Scheme will result in no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and that no severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be created by the Scheme. An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. The Scheme would not require additional transport infrastructure.
	5.14.20	Development consent should not be withheld provided that the applicant is willing to enter into planning obligations for funding new infrastructure or requirements can be imposed to mitigate transport impacts. In this situation the Secretary of State should apply appropriately limited weight to residual effects on the surrounding transport infrastructure.	
	5.14.21	The Secretary of State should only consider refusing development on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, or it does not show how consideration has been given to the provision of adequate active public or shared transport access and provision.	
Resource and Waste Management			
Applicant's Assessment	5.15.6	Applicants must demonstrate that development proposals are in line with Defra's policy position on the role of energy from waste in treating residual waste.	The overall approach to the management of waste at each phase of the development together with the expected quantities of waste that is to be generated / managed in connection with the Scheme is set out in the **outline Waste Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** This demonstrates how the Scheme will adopt the waste hierarchy (prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, other recovery, and disposal as a last resort) at every stage of the development.
	5.15.7	The proposed plant must not compete with greater waste prevention, re-use, or recycling, or result in over-capacity of EfW or similar processes for the treatment of residual waste at a national or local level.	
	5.15.8	The applicant should set out the arrangements that are proposed for managing any waste produced and prepare a report that sets out the sustainable management of waste and use of resources throughout any relevant demolition, excavation and construction activities.	
	5.15.9	The arrangements described and a report setting out the sustainable management of waste and use of resources should include information on how re-use and recycling will be maximised in addition to the proposed waste recovery and disposal system for all waste generated by the development. They should also include an assessment of the impact of the waste arising from development on the capacity of waste management facilities to deal with other waste arising in the area for at least five years of operation.	
	5.15.10	The applicant is encouraged to refer to the Waste Prevention Programme for England: Maximising Resources Minimising Waste and 'Towards Zero Waste: Our Waste Strategy for Wales' and should seek to minimise the volume of waste produced and the volume of waste sent for disposal unless it can be demonstrated that this is the best overall environmental outcome.	
	5.15.12	The UK is committed to moving towards a more 'circular economy'. Where possible, applicants are encouraged to source materials from recycled or reused sources and use	

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		low carbon materials, sustainable sources and local suppliers. Construction best practices should be used to ensure that material is reused or recycled onsite where possible.	
	5.15.13	Applicants are also encouraged to use construction best practices in relation to storing materials in an adequate and protected place on site to prevent waste, for example, from damage or vandalism. The use of Building Information Management tools (or similar) to record the materials used in construction can help to reduce waste in future decommissioning of facilities, by identifying materials that can be recycled or reused.	
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.15.14	The Secretary of State should consider the extent to which the applicant has proposed an effective system for managing hazardous and non-hazardous waste arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development.	The overall approach to the management of waste at each phase of the development together with the expected quantities of waste that is to be generated / managed in connection with the Scheme is set out in the **outline Waste Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** The Scheme will adopt the waste hierarchy (prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, other recovery, and disposal as a last resort) during all phases. During the construction phase this would include measures to minimise and recycle construction waste, prioritising reuse and recycling in line with the waste hierarchy. Any site-generated waste will be tracked and disposed of via licensed waste operators, ensuring compliance with local and national waste regulations. During the operational phase is expected that panels and other equipment would need to be replaced, and measures are proposed for the recycling of panels. Specifically, UK based recycling facilities, many of whom are in the process of being proposed by national waste management companies in anticipation of a growing need for bespoke solar panel recycling facilities. When the operational phase ends, the Scheme would be decommissioned. All solar PV modules, mounting poles, cabling, inverters, transformers, BESS equipment, the East Park Energy Substation, and fencing would be removed from the Site and recycled or disposed of in accordance with best practice and market conditions at that time. The decommissioning of the Scheme would be secured through the **draft Development Consent Order [EN010141/DR/3.1**], and the detailed method of demolition though the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** The Applicant would demonstrate that processes are in place to meet relevant Environmental Permit requirements, should a regime relating to hazardous or non-hazardous waste be required for the Scheme.
	5.15.15	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that: • any such waste will be properly managed, both on-site and off-site. • the waste from the proposed facility can be dealt with appropriately by the waste infrastructure which is, or is likely to be, available. Such waste arisings should not have an adverse effect on the capacity of existing waste management facilities to deal with other waste arisings in the area. • adequate steps have been taken to minimise the volume of waste arisings, and of the volume of waste arisings sent for recovery or disposal, except where that is the best overall environmental outcome.	
	5.15.16	Where necessary, the Secretary of State should use requirements or obligations to ensure that appropriate measures for waste management are applied.	
	5.15.17	The Secretary of State may wish to include a condition on revision of waste management plans at reasonable intervals when giving consent.	
	5.15.18	Where the project will be subject to the Environmental Permitting regime, waste management arrangements during operations will be covered by the permit and the considerations set out in Section 4.12 will apply.	
	5.15.19	The Secretary of State should have regard to any potential impacts on the achievement of resource efficiency and waste reduction targets set under the Environment Act 2021 or wider goals set out in the government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.	
Water Quality and Resources			
Applicant's Assessment	5.16.3	Where the project is likely to have effects on the water environment, the applicant should undertake an assessment of the existing status of, and impacts of the proposed project on, water quality, water resources and physical characteristics of the water environment, and how this might change due to the impact of climate change on rainfall patterns and	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant effects on the water environment, taking account the potential impacts of climate change. The assessment concludes that, accounting for embedded and additional mitigations, there

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		consequently water availability across the water environment, as part of the ES or equivalent (see Section 4.3 and 4.10).	would be no significant effects during either the construction, operational or decommissioning stages of the Scheme. A Water Framework Directive Assessment is provided at **ES Vol 2 Chapter 8-2: Water Framework Directive Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. As set out in the above assessments, and in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**, the Applicant has consulted with the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority throughout the pre-application process.
	5.16.4	The applicant should make early contact with the relevant regulators, including the local authority, the Environment Agency and Marine Management Organisation, where appropriate, for relevant licensing and environmental permitting requirements.	
	5.16.5	Where possible, applicants are encouraged to manage surface water during construction by treating surface water runoff from exposed topsoil prior to discharging and to limit the discharge of suspended solids e.g. from car parks or other areas of hard standing, during operation.	The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy at **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** sets out drainage measures that will be adopted at the detailed design stage for the Scheme. The drainage strategy utilises Sustainable Drainage Systems principles across the Site. An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate any potential direct or indirect impacts from pollution during the construction phase. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** and **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively.
	5.16.6	Applicants are encouraged to consider protective measures to control the risk of pollution to groundwater beyond those outlined in River Basin Management Plans and Groundwater Protection Zones – this could include, for example, the use of protective barriers.	
	5.16.7	The ES should in particular describe: • the existing quality of waters affected by the proposed project and the impacts of the proposed project on water quality, noting any relevant existing discharges, proposed new discharges and proposed changes to discharges • existing water resources affected by the proposed project and the impacts of the proposed project on water resources, noting any relevant existing abstraction rates, proposed new abstraction rates and proposed changes to abstraction rates (including any impact on or use of mains supplies and reference to Abstraction Licensing Strategies) and also demonstrate how proposals minimise the use of water resources and water consumption in the first instance • existing physical characteristics of the water environment (including quantity and dynamics of flow) affected by the proposed project and any impact of physical modifications to these characteristics • any impacts of the proposed project on water bodies or protected areas (including shellfish protected areas) under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 and source protection zones (SPZs) around potable groundwater abstractions • how climate change could impact any of the above in the future • any cumulative effects	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant effects on the water environment, taking account the potential impacts of climate change. A Water Framework Directive Assessment is provided at **ES Vol 2 Chapter 8-2: Water Framework Directive Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The assessments conclude that the Scheme will result in no significant effects on water quality and water resources.
Mitigation	5.16.8	The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed over and above any which may form part of the project application. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at that stage.	An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate any potential direct or indirect impacts from pollution during the construction phase. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental**

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	5.16.9	The risk of impacts on the water environment can be reduced through careful design to facilitate adherence to good pollution control practice. For example, designated areas for storage and unloading, with appropriate drainage facilities, should be clearly marked.	**Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively.
	5.16.10	The impact on local water resources can be minimised through planning and design for the efficient use of water, including water recycling. If a development needs new water infrastructure, significant supplies or impacts other water supplies, the applicant should consult with the local water company and the EA or NRW.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme will only require a limited supply of water which can be provided by existing Pump House located close to the Main Site Access north of Site D on the B645. The Applicant has consulted with Anglian Water regarding water supply, as set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. Whilst no formal agreement has been reached over water supply, following discussion with Anglian Water the Applicant has provided an assumption regarding the likely water requirements for the Scheme (see **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**, and the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]**) Following discussion with Anglian Water the Applicant has also included the Pump House east of Great Staughton within the Order Limits, to provide a water main to the Site, if required.
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.16.11	Activities that discharge to the water environment are subject to pollution control. The considerations set out in Section 4.12 on the interface between planning and pollution control therefore apply. These considerations will also apply in an analogous way to the abstraction licensing regime regulating activities that take water from the water environment, and to the control regimes relating to works to, and structures in, on, or under controlled waters.	The Applicant has already responded to the requirements of Section 4.12 of NPS EN-1 elsewhere in this Policy Compliance Document. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the EA's 'Source Protection Zones' data indicates that the Order Limits are outside of any Source Protection Zones (designated as such under the Water Framework Directive). However, it is within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone (for surface water), which is a wider designation that is given to the contributing catchments of Drinking Water Protected Areas, where these are at risk of failing drinking water protection objectives. The reason for being 'at risk' is because of total pesticides and individual pesticides (such as metaldehyde, propyzamide, carbetamide and quinmerac), from agricultural activities within the contributing catchment. The Scheme will have no impact on such risks as there will be no use of pesticides within the Site, it is also likely to contribute to improvements as pesticides are currently used in agricultural practices across the Site. There are EA registered or private water abstractions located near to and downstream of watercourses within the Site boundary (see **ES Vol 3 Figure 8-9: Licenced Abstractions [EN010141/DR/6.3]**).The abstractions downstream of the Site were all licenced for either spray irrigation (agricultural use) or electricity generation (hydropower).The Scheme does not involve groundwater abstraction and would not have potential to affect these abstractions.
	5.16.12	The Secretary of State will need to give impacts on the water environment more weight where a project would have an adverse effect on the achievement of the environmental objectives established under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.	A Water Framework Directive Assessment is provided at **ES Vol 2 Chapter 8-2: Water Framework Directive Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The assessment concludes the Scheme is WFD compliant.
	5.16.13	The Secretary of State must also consider duties under other legislation including duties under the Environment Act 2021 in relation to environmental targets and have regard to the policies set out in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.	The relevant legislation is set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and its supporting appendices.

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	5.16.14	The Secretary of State should be satisfied that a proposal has regard to current River Basin Management Plans and meets the requirements of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (including regulation 19). The specific objectives for particular river basins are set out in River Basin Management Plans. The Secretary of State must refuse development consent where a project is likely to cause deterioration of a water body or its failure to achieve good status or good potential, unless the requirements set out in Regulation 19 are met. A project may be approved in the absence of a qualifying Overriding Public Interest test only if there is sufficient certainty that it will not cause deterioration or compromise the achievement of good status or good potential.	A Water Framework Directive Assessment is provided at **ES Vol 2 Chapter 8-2: Water Framework Directive Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The assessment concludes the Scheme is WFD compliant. There are no Water Resources Management Plans or Shoreline Management Plans applicable to the Order Limits.
	5.16.15	The Secretary of State should also consider the interactions of the proposed project with other plans such as Water Resources Management Plans and Shoreline Management Plans.	
	5.16.16	The Secretary of State should consider proposals to mitigate adverse effects on the water environment and any enhancement measures put forward by the applicant and whether appropriate requirements should be attached to any development consent and/or planning obligations are necessary.	An **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** has been prepared that sets out control measures which will be adopted to mitigate any potential direct or indirect impacts from pollution during the construction phase. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively.

3.0 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE (EN-3)

3.1.1 Table 2 sets out policy requirements from the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3).

Table 2: National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)

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Section 2.3: Factors Influencing Site Selection			
Factors influencing site selection	2.3.1	Factors influencing site selection by applicants for renewable energy generating stations are set out below.	The location of new renewable energy infrastructure is not generally directed by the Government and is instead dictated by individual developers based upon demand, capacity and assessment of development constraint. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** provide evidence to justify the site selection, the scale of the development, and alternatives considered. The site identification process was founded upon the specific site selection criteria set out within EN-3 (and EN-1) and includes commentary on the overall weight that has been attached to each in identifying the preferred area of search for the Scheme and the identification of land within the area of search.
	2.3.2	The specific criteria considered by applicants and the weight they give to them will vary from project to project.	
	2.3.4	The choices which applicants make in selecting sites reflect their assessment of the risk that the Secretary of State, following the general points set out in Section 4.1 of EN-1, will not grant consent in any given case.	
National designations	2.3.6	When considering applications for CNP Infrastructure in sites with nationally recognised designations (such as SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Registered Parks and Gardens, and World Heritage Sites), the Secretary of State will take as the starting point that the relevant tests in Sections 5.4 and 5.10 of EN-1 have been met, and any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by the urgent need for this type of infrastructure.	In accordance with NPS EN-1, the Scheme is classified as CNP infrastructure. There are no nationally recognised designations within the Order Limits.
	2.3.8	In considering the impact on the historic environment as set out in Section 5.9 of EN-1 and whether the Secretary of State is satisfied that the substantial public benefits would outweigh any loss or harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should take into account the positive role that large-scale renewable projects play in the mitigation of climate change, the delivery of energy security and the urgency of meeting the net zero target.	An assessment of the project in terms of Section 5.9 NPS EN-1 is provided in Table 1 above. As presented in in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Setting Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1],** the Applicant has identified a significant (in EIA terms) operational phase effect upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D, which is assessed as resulting in 'less than substantial harm' of low to mid-level upon the asset. The Applicant has also assessed the impact of the Scheme upon designated heritage assets. Minor adverse effects (i.e. not significant in EIA terms) that equate to 'less than substantial harm' are predicted upon the settings of designated heritage assets as is detailed in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and in Paragraphs 6.8.54 to 6.8.61 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.

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			The predicted levels of 'less than substantial harm' are at the low to mid end of the scale and it is considered that there is no potential to further mitigate these effects (which are not significant in EIA terms). Paragraphs 6.8.62 to 6.8.66 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** note that upon the completion of the decommissioning the long-term effects of the operational phase on the setting of assets would be removed, with the setting of those assets restored to the current baseline condition with the exception of the elements of new green infrastructure which would be left in place at the point of decommissioning. An **oHES [EN010141/DR/7.16]**, has also been produced which contains recommended measures for making a positive contribution to the historic environment. These measures are also presented in Paragraphs 6.7.33 to 6.7.36 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** The public benefits of the proposal, including the demonstrable need for the Scheme, are set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**. In accordance with paragraph 5.9.32 of NPS EN-1, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Scheme is CNP infrastructure that would deliver substantial public benefits. This is supported by paragraph 4.2.16 of NPS EN-1 which confirms that CNP infrastructure should be treated as meeting any test which requires a clear outweighing of harm.
Other locational considerations	2.3.9	As most renewable energy resources can only be developed where the resource exists and where economically feasible, and because there are no limits on the need established in Part 3 of EN-1, the Secretary of State should not use a consecutive approach in the consideration of renewable energy projects (for example, by giving priority to the re-use of previously developed land for renewable technology developments).	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out the approach to site selection and consideration of potential alternative sites and is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2].** In accordance with the government requirement to urgently deploy large scale ground-mounted solar across the UK, the Applicant wishes to utilise the available capacity at National Grid's Easton Socon substation and all necessary agreements are in place for use the spare grid capacity. The Site Identification Report **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** identifies sites or areas within a viable distance (15km) of the substation and then appraised those areas of land that are undeveloped (i.e. not urban) against the '*Factors Influencing Site Selection*' set out in Section 2.10 of NPS EN-3. The Site Identification Report and subsequent Land Identification Reports confirm that the Site is the most appropriate location for the Scheme, taking all relevent factors into account.
Section 2.4: Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience			
Solar photovoltaic	2.4.11	Solar photovoltaic (PV) sites may also be proposed in low lying exposed sites. For these proposals, applicants should consider, in particular, how plant will be resilient to: • increased risk of flooding; and • impact of higher temperatures.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]** includes a climate resilience assessment that has considered the full lifetime of the Scheme. This assessment includes forecast changes to the UK climate over the lifetime of the project. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents a FRA for the Scheme which includes flood modelling that accounts for likely future changes in the climate. The Scheme has a

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			'design flood level' that accounts for potential future increases in rainfall from more frequent storms and rises in sea level. The assessments confirm the Scheme has been designed to be resilient to changes in climate.
Section 2.5: Consideration of Good Design for Energy Infrastructure			
Good design	2.5.1	Section 4.7 of EN-1 sets out the criteria for good design that should be applied to all energy infrastructure.	The Applicant has prepared a **Design Approach Document** ***[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** which sets out the design process that has been followed from the inception of the project, and how the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Good Design has been followed. It explains • how the design vision and design principles have guided the design process, • how the design of the Scheme has evolved through each stage of the pre-application development process, • how consultation feedback at each stage has guided design changes, and • how the outcomes of environmental surveys and assessment have been integrated with the process.
	2.5.2	Proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design, particularly in respect of landscape and visual amenity, opportunities for co-existence/co-location with other marine and terrestrial uses, and in the design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology and heritage.	
Section 2.6: Flexibility in the Project Details			
Flexibility	2.6.1	Where details are still to be finalised, applicants should explain in the application which elements of the proposal have yet to be finalised, and the reason why this is the case.	The precise layout of the Scheme and equipment selection has not been finalised. It is therefore essential to provide a degree of flexibility within the DCO to allow the detailed design to react to these variables. The technical assessments within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** have therefore assessed an 'envelope' within which the works will take place, defined using a parameter-based approach as set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement** ***[EN010141/DR/7.1]***. As such, the ES has been based upon maximum and, where relevant, minimum parameters and defined work areas where the types of development can take place. The design parameters are based on industry knowledge and best practice, such that a sufficient degree of flexibility is provided within the DCO. These parameters are considered in detail in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and across the individual assessments within the ES to ensure the reasonable worst-case effects of the Scheme are assessed for each potential receptor. This also ensures the identification of any 'likely significant effects'.
	2.6.2	Where flexibility is sought in the consent as a result, applicants should, to the best of their knowledge, assess the likely worst-case environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed development to ensure that the impacts of the project as it may be constructed have been properly assessed.	
Section 2.10: Solar Photovoltaic Generation			
Introduction	2.10.9	The government has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions by 2050. As such, solar is a key part of the government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector.	The Applicant has prepared a Statement of Need which forms part of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].** It sets out how the Scheme supports the Government's objectives to achieve net zero emissions in accordance with the Clean Power 2030 plan.

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	2.10.10	Solar also has an important role in delivering the government's goals for greater energy independence. The British Energy Security Strategy states that government expects a five-fold increase in combined ground and rooftop solar deployment by 2035 (up to 70GW). It sets out that government is supportive of solar that is "co-located with other functions (for example, agriculture, onshore wind generation, or storage) to maximise the efficiency of land use".	The Scheme is recognised as CNP infrastructure by NPS EN-1 and would deliver substantial environmental, economic and social benefits.
	2.10.11	The Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan states that government seeks large scale ground-mount solar deployment across the UK, looking for development mainly on brownfield, industrial and low and medium grade agricultural land. It sets out that solar and farming can be complementary, supporting each other financially, environmentally and through shared use of land, and encourages deployment of solar technology that delivers environmental benefits, with consideration for ongoing food production or environmental improvement.	
	2.10.13	Solar farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation.	
	2.10.14	Solar farms can be built quickly and, coupled with consistent reductions in the cost of materials and improvements in the efficiency of panels, large-scale solar is now viable in some cases to deploy subsidy-free.	
	2.10.15	Solar farm proposals are currently likely to consist of solar panel arrays, mounting structures, piles, inverters, transformers and cables.	Schedule 1 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** sets out the works for which consent is being applied for. A detailed description of the Scheme is provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	2.10.16	Associated infrastructure may also be proposed and may be treated, on a case by case basis, as associated development, such as energy storage, electrolysers associated with the production of low carbon hydrogen, or security arrangements (which may encompass flood defences, fencing, lighting and surveillance).	
	2.10.17	Along with associated infrastructure, a solar farm requires between 2 to 4 acres for each MW of output. A typical 50MW solar farm will consist of around 100,000 to 150,000 panels and cover between 125 to 200 acres. However, this will vary significantly depending on the site, with some being larger and some being smaller. This is also expected to change over time as the technology continues to evolve to become more efficient. Nevertheless, this scale of development will inevitably have impacts, particularly if sited in rural areas.	The Order Limits cover an area of 773 hectares, which is equivalent to 1910.1 acres. The generating capacity of the Scheme is 400 MW, which equates to approximately 4.78 acres per MW of output. Whilst this is slightly higher than the typical estimates set out in paragraph 2.10.17 of NPS EN-3, there are specific constraints and requirements at the Site that justify the required land take. They include: • Land constrained by existing utilities and where the **Works Plans *[EN010141/DR/2.3]*** have made allowance for easement strips to protect the assets • Land retained or proposed as part of the on-site green infrastructure network of habitats, green spaces and recreational access, as set out in the Design Approach Document ***[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** • Land required to accommodate the cable corridors and grid connection route (which extend several km) • Land required to accommodation associated infrastructure including, for example, the 100MW BESS within East Park Site D

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			• Land retained within the order limits to secure the long-term protection and management of the Scheduled Monument (a Roman Town identified following the Geophysical Survey) within East Park Site C Taking the above factors into account, the Scheme remains an efficient use of land. The locational requirements that justify the site selection are set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, supported and supplemented by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2].** The precise layout of the Scheme and equipment selection has not been finalised. It is therefore essential to provide a degree of flexibility within the DCO to allow the detailed design to react to these variables.
Factors influencing site selection	2.10.18	The key considerations involved in the siting of a solar farm are likely to be influenced by factors set out in the following paragraphs, in addition to considerations specific to individual projects.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out the approach to site selection and consideration of potential alternative sites and is supported / supplemented by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2].**
	2.10.19	Irradiance will be a key consideration for the applicant in identifying a potential site as the amount of electricity generated on site is directly affected by irradiance levels. Irradiance of a site will in turn be affected by surrounding topography, with an uncovered or exposed site of good elevation and favourable south-facing aspect more likely to increase year-round irradiance levels. This in turn affects the carbon emission savings and the commercial viability of the site.	The Applicant has considered irradiance and topography in the site and land selection and in the approach to scheme design (see **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6])**
	2.10.20	In order to maximise irradiance, applicants may choose a site and design its layout with variable and diverse panel types and aspects, and panel arrays may also follow the movement of the sun in order further to maximise the solar resource.	
	2.10.21	Applicants should consider important issues relating to network connection at Section 4.11 of EN-1 and in EN-5. In particular, and where appropriate, applicants should proceed in a manner consistent with the regulatory regime for offshore transmission networks established by Ofgem, details of which are set out in EN-5.	As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Scheme would be connected into the distribution network at the National Grid Eaton Socon Substation. There is capacity within the substation to accept the connection and the Applicant has an agreement with the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to generate and supply electricity. This PCD confirms the Applicant has had regard to Section 4.11 of NPS EN-1, and NPS EN-5. The Applicant is not proposing to connect directly into the transmission network.
	2.10.22	Many solar farms are connected into the local distribution network. The capacity of the local grid network to accept the likely output from a proposed solar farm is critical to the technical and commercial feasibility of a development proposal.	
	2.10.23	Larger developments may seek connection to the transmission network if there is available network capacity and/or supportive infrastructure.	

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	2.10.24	In either case the connection voltage, availability of network capacity, and the distance from the solar farm to the existing network can have a significant effect on the commercial feasibility of a development proposal.	The Applicant has considered the network connection within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. This set the maximum distance a viable grid connection could be achieved.
	2.10.25	To maximise existing grid infrastructure, minimise disruption to existing local community infrastructure or biodiversity and reduce overall costs, applicants may choose a site based on nearby available grid export capacity.	
	2.10.26	Where this is the case, applicants should consider the cumulative impacts of situating a solar farm in proximity to other energy generating stations and infrastructure.	The Scheme is proposed in proximity to National Grid's Easton Socon Substation, and the wider area already features other energy generating stations and infrastructure (including both solar, wind and BESS developments), overhead pylons and power lines, and other existing and proposed utilities. The Site is therefore in an area which has an established history of energy infrastructure. The impact of the Scheme alongside existing land uses is set out in the assessment of likely significant effects within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]**. The cumulative impact of the Scheme alongside other emerging or consented land uses is set out within the environmental assessments in the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** and summarised within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 17: Cumulative and In Combination Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	2.10.27	Utility-scale solar farms are large sites that may have a significant zone of visual influence. The two main impact issues that determine distances to sensitive receptors are therefore likely to be visual amenity and glint and glare. These are considered in Landscape, Visual and Residential Amenity (paragraphs 2.10.93-2.10.101) and Glint and Glare (paragraphs 2.10.102 – 2.10.106) impact sections below.	The approach taken to avoiding and minimising the visual and glint and glare impacts of the Scheme is set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.5]**. This has been informed by the outcome of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment provided at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-7: Glint and Glare Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.
	2.10.28	Solar is a highly flexible technology and as such can be deployed on a wide variety of land types.	The Scheme has followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts on land of a higher agricultural value where possible, beginning with the site selection stage reported in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2**]. The site identification exercise firstly considered brownfield / previously developed land within a 15km search radius of the point of connection at the Eaton Socon Substation. This land was not availiable, and the assessment ultimately concluded that that there was no Search Zone around the point of connection that was not constrained in some way, and that only by taking a balanced consideration of technical and environmental factors was it possible to select a search zone for the Site. The key determining factor in recommending the final Search Zone for the Site was that it was likely to have the most straightforward grid connection, which in turn would avoid and reduce environmental impacts, affect less landowners, and ensure that the Scheme remains commercially viable. In terms of agricultural land classification, it was established that the Site would be likely to include some areas of BMV land, but that with the evidence available it was unlikely to contain significantly greater or lesser extents of BMV land than any other area within 15km of the point of connection. NPS EN-3 is clear however (Paragraph 2.10.29) that '*land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location'*. The above measures set out the steps taken to avoid development of BMV land as far as practicable, being the first step in the mitigation hierarchy. The ALC distribution across the Site is reported in Table 13.8 of **ES Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which is as follows:
	2.10.29	While land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location applicants should, where possible, utilise suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of "Best and Most Versatile" agricultural land where possible. 'Best and Most Versatile agricultural land is defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.	
	2.10.30	Whilst the development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, or sites designated for their natural beauty, or recognised for ecological or archaeological importance, the impacts of such are expected to be considered and are discussed under paragraphs 2.10.73 – 92 and 2.10.107 – 2.10.126.	
	2.10.31	It is recognised that at this scale, it is likely that applicants' developments will use some agricultural land. Applicants should explain their choice of site, noting the preference for	

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		development to be on suitable brownfield, industrial and low and medium grade agricultural land.	• Grade 2 - 164.0 ha (21.2%); • Grade 3a - 349.5 ha (45.2%); and • Grade 3b - 182.4 ha (23.6%). There are also small areas of the Site classed as ungraded and non-agricultural, with ungraded land treated as Grade 2 for environmental assessment purposes. In total, and as set out in **ES Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the Scheme would only result in permanent adverse impact to approximately 5.76 hectares of best and most versatile land. The remainder of the best and most versatile (Grade 2 and Grade 3a) land within the Site would not be permanently adversely impacted by the Scheme and could be easily reverted to its existing agricultural condition upon completion, with anticipated benefits in relation to soil structure and resources. The need for and benefits of the Scheme are well established in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, and it is considered that the substantial positive weight that should be afforded to the Scheme clearly outweighs the limited negative weight that should be given to the harm to agricultural land and soils. This is consistent with recent SoS decisions on other solar NSIPs that have resulted in the temporary and permanent loss of BMV land.
	2.10.32	Where sited on agricultural land, consideration may be given as to whether the proposal allows for continued agricultural use and/or can be co-located with other functions (for example, onshore wind generation, storage, hydrogen electrolysers) to maximise the efficiency of land use.	The arable agricultural land uses within the Order Limits would not be able to continue once the Scheme is operational, however the Scheme will extend the areas of rough grazing pasture present within the Site by establishing it within the solar development areas. As set out in the **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]***, the Applicant is proposing to continue grazing within the solar fence line. Whilst the Scheme covers a number of different agricultural units with differing ownerships. It would not prevent these uses from continuing as they do currently. The Scheme also includes co-located energy storage to maximise the efficiency of the on-site generation and increase the efficiency of the land use.
	2.10.33	The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is the only approved system for grading agricultural quality in England and Wales and, if necessary, field surveys should be used to establish the ALC grades in accordance with the current, or any successor to it, grading criteria and identify the soil types to inform soil management at the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases in line with the Defra Construction Code.	As noted in the response to 2.10.28 – 2.10.31 the identification of BMV land on the site was carried out through a formal ALC survey (**ES Vol 2 Appendix 13-1: Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Survey [EN010141/DR/6.2])** the results of which are summarised in **ES Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1].**
	2.10.34	Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Resources and Management Plan which could help to use and manage soils sustainably and minimise adverse impacts on soil health and potential land contamination. This should be in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan to bring at least 40% of England's agricultural soils into sustainable management by 2028 and increase this up to 60% by 2030.	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Soil Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.9]*** that sets out measures which will be adopted to minimise impacts on soil health and minimise the risk of land contamination. The outline Soil Management Plan and the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** together set out embedded control measures that will be implemented during the construction phase.
	2.10.35	Applicants will need to consider the suitability of the access routes to the proposed site for both the construction and operation of the solar farm with the former likely to raise more issues.	The Applicant has considered the potential access routes in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6].**

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	2.10.36	Given that potential solar farm sites are largely in rural areas, access for the delivery of solar arrays and associated infrastructure during construction can be a significant consideration for solar farm siting.	The site access strategy has been to minimise construction vehicle movements on the public highway and to maximise the number of movements that can be accommodated within the Order Limits.
	2.10.37	Developers will usually need to construct on-site access routes for operation and maintenance activities, such as footpaths, earthworks, or landscaping.	The Applicant has set out the access routes and access strategy that is necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Scheme within Table 2-32 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1].** This includes new access routes to the public road network.
	2.10.38	In addition, sometimes access routes will need to be constructed to connect solar farms to the public road network.	
	2.10.39	Applications should include the full extent of the access routes necessary for operation and maintenance and an assessment of their effects.	
	2.10.40	Proposed developments may affect the provision of public rights of way networks.	As set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** and shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**, the Scheme maintains the functionality and connectivity of the existing green infrastructure network. The Scheme includes new areas of accessible natural green space through the Site, as well as new permissive paths(in Site B) to provide enhanced recreational access. Existing public rights of way would be retained throughout the operational phase. There would be temporary diversions and closures of public rights of way during the construction phase. Public rights of way would be managed in accordance with the **outline Public Right of Way Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.8]***, which will be developed into a detailed Public Right of Way Management Plan post consent, and is secured by a requirement of the DCO. Design measures to mitigate impacts on users of the public right of way network is set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. However, these include a 10m buffer between fencing surrounding solar PV modules and public rights of way (20m corridors), planting of vegetation along sections of public rights of way to screen views of the development, improvement of surfacing and waymarking.
	2.10.41	Public rights of way may need to be temporarily closed or diverted to enable construction, however, applicants should keep, as far as is practicable and safe, all public rights of way that cross the proposed development site open during construction and protect users where a public right of way borders or crosses the site.	
	2.10.42	Applicants are encouraged to design the layout and appearance of the site to ensure continued recreational use of public rights of way where possible during construction, and in particular during operation of the site.	
	2.10.43	Applicants are encouraged where possible to minimise the visual impacts of the development for those using existing public rights of way, considering the impacts this may have on any other visual amenities in the surrounding landscape.	
	2.10.44	Applicants should consider and maximise opportunities to facilitate enhancements to the public rights of way and the inclusion, through site layout and design of access, of new opportunities for the public to access and cross proposed solar development sites (whether via the adoption of new public rights of way or the creation of permissive paths), taking into account, where appropriate, the views of landowners.	
	2.10.45	Applicants should set out detail on how public rights of way would be managed to ensure they are safe to use in an outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan.	
	2.10.46	Security of the site is a key consideration for developers. Applicants may wish to consider not only the availability of natural defences such as steep gradients, hedging and rivers but also perimeter security measures such as fencing, electronic security, CCTV and lighting, with the measures proposed on a site-specific basis.	Site-specific security measures are set out in the description of the Scheme at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which includes a description of the fencing and CCTV. The impacts of site security measures have been fully considered as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.

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	2.10.47	Applicants should assess the visual impact of these security measures, as well as the impacts on local residents, including for example issues relating to intrusion from CCTV and light pollution in the vicinity of the site.	The Applicant has consulted with regards site security, as set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1 / 5.2]**.
	2.10.48	Applicants should consider the need to minimise the impact on the landscape and the visual impact of security measures.	
Technical considerations	2.10.49	Applications for solar farms are likely to comprise a number of elements including solar panel arrays, piling, inverters, mounting structures, cabling, earthworks, and measures associated with site security, and may also include associated infrastructure such as energy storage and electrolysers associated with the production of low carbon hydrogen.	Schedule 1 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** sets out the works for which consent is being applied for. A full description of the Scheme and each of the proposed works packages is provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	2.10.50	Solar panels generate electricity in direct current (DC) form. A number of panels feed an external inverter, which is used to convert the electricity to alternating current (AC). After inversion a transformer will step-up the voltage for export to the grid. Because the inverter is separate from the panels, the total capacity of a solar farm can be measured either in terms of the combined capacity of installed solar panels (measured in DC) or in terms of combined capacity of installed inverters (measured in AC).	The Scheme has a generating capacity that exceeds 50 MW (AC) and is therefore classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under Section 14(1)(a) and Section 15(1) and 15(2) of the Planning Act 2008. The Scheme would exceed the 50 MW threshold whether measured in DC or AC. It would also exceed the new 100 MW threshold for NSIPs for onshore wind and solar generation, which is due to take effect from December 31, 2025.
	2.10.51	For the purposes of determining the capacity thresholds in Section 15 of the 2008 Act, all forms of generation other than solar are currently assessed on an AC basis, while a practice has developed where solar farms are assessed on their DC capacity.	
	2.10.52	Having reviewed this matter, the Secretary of State is now content that this disparity should end, particularly as electricity from some other forms of generation is switched between DC and AC within a generator before it is measured.	
	2.10.53	From the date of designation of this NPS, for the purposes of Section 15 of the Planning Act 2008, the maximum combined capacity of the installed inverters (measured in alternating current (AC)) should be used for the purposes of determining solar site capacity.	
	2.10.54	The capacity threshold is 50MW (AC) in England and 350MW (AC) in Wales.	
	2.10.55	The installed generating capacity of a solar farm will decline over time in correlation with the reduction in panel array efficiency. There is a range of sources of degradation that developers need to consider when deciding on a solar panel technology to be used. Applicants may account for this by overplanting solar panel arrays.	An appropriate level of overplanting has been allowed for within the Scheme to off-set any degradation of panels over time and to maximise the grid connection across the lifetime of the project.
	2.10.56	AC installed export capacity should not be seen as an appropriate tool to constrain the impacts of a solar farm. Applicants should use other measurements, such as panel size,	The approach to assessing the impacts of the Scheme is set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 4: EIA Methodology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.

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		total area and percentage of ground cover to set the maximum extent of development when determining the planning impacts of an application.	The technical assessments within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** have assessed an 'envelope' within which the works will take place, defined using a parameter-based approach as set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement *[EN010141/DR/7.1]***. As such, the ES has been based upon maximum and, where relevant, minimum parameters and defined work areas where the types of development can take place. The design parameters are based on industry knowledge and best practice such that a sufficient degree of flexibility is provided within the DCO. These parameters are considered in detail in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and across the individual assessments within the ES to ensure the reasonable worst-case effects of the Scheme are assessed for each potential receptor. This ensures the 'likely significant effects' are identified.
	2.10.57	Nothing in this section should be taken to change any development consent or other planning permission granted prior to the designation of this NPS. Any such permission should be interpreted on the basis upon which it was examined and granted.	This does not apply to the Scheme.
	2.10.58	In particular, any permissions granted on the basis of a DC installed generating capacity should be built on that basis, unless an amendment is made to that permission and the difference in impacts is considered.	
	2.10.59	Applicants should consider the criteria for good design set out in EN-1 Section 4.7 at an early stage when developing projects.	The Applicant has prepared a **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** which sets out the design process that has been followed from the inception of the project, and how the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Good Design has been followed. It explains: • how the design vision and design principles have guided the design process, • how the design of the Scheme has evolved through each stage of the pre-application development process, • how consultation feedback at each stage has guided design changes, and • how the outcomes of environmental surveys and assessment have been integrated with the process.
	2.10.60	As set out above applicants will consider several factors when considering the design and layout of sites, including proximity to available grid capacity to accommodate the scale of generation, orientation, topography, previous land–use, and ability to mitigate environmental impacts and flood risk.	
	2.10.61	For a solar farm to generate electricity efficiently the panel array spacing should seek to maximise the potential power output of the site. The type, spacing and aspect of panel arrays will depend on the physical characteristics of the site such as site elevation.	A description of the Scheme is provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, which includes the design parameters that will apply to the solar arrays. In relation to the orientation of the panels, the solar PV modules would be orientated with an azimuth angle of between 175° and 185°. Flexibility has been sought to take into account any change in environmental / land conditions. This would be secured through a Requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**.Alternative layouts and technologies that have been considered are summarised in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	2.10.62	In terms of design and layout, applicants may favour a south-facing arrangement of panels to maximise output although other orientations may be chosen. For example, an east-west layout, whilst likely to result in reduced output compared to south-facing panels on a panel-by-panel basis, may allow for a greater density of panels to compensate and therefore for generation to be spread more evenly throughout the day.	
	2.10.63	It is likely that underground and overhead cabling will be required to connect the electrical assets of the site, such as from the substation to the panel arrays or storage facilities.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme would utilise both underground and overhead cabling.

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	2.10.64	In the case of underground cabling, applicants are expected to provide a method statement describing cable trench design, installation methodology, as well as details of the operation and maintenance regime.	Underground cabling would be used within and between the Solar Array Development Areas (Sites A - D) to connect the solar arrays to the on-site inverters and transformers, and on to the BESS and the East Park Energy Substation. It would also be used for the grid connection between the East Park Energy Substation and the National Grid Eaton Socon Substation. The construction, installation and maintenance method for the proposed cabling is set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	2.10.65	Applicants should consider the design life of solar panel efficiency over time when determining the period for which consent is required. An upper limit of 40 years is typical, although applicants may seek consent without a time-period or for differing time-periods of operation.	The Applicant is applying for the Scheme with a time-limited consent of 40 years for the operational phase, as secured by a Requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**. Decommissioning activities would commence at the end of the operational phase. The Scheme is therefore considered to comprise temporary development.
	2.10.66	Time limited consent, where granted, is described as temporary because there is a finite period for which it exists, after which the project would cease to have consent and therefore must seek to extend the period of consent or be decommissioned and removed.	
	2.10.67	Solar panel efficiency deteriorates over time and applicants may elect to replace panels during the lifetime of the site.	The assumed operational lifespan of different components of the Scheme are provided in Table 2-35 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. It is expected that panels and other equipment would need to be replaced during the operational phase of the Scheme, and measures in relation to recycling or recovering materials from panels and other equipment are set out within the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***.
	2.10.68	Solar panels can be decommissioned relatively easily and cheaply. The nature and extent of decommissioning of a site can vary. Generally, it is expected that the panel arrays and mounting structures will be decommissioned, and underground cabling dug out to ensure that prior use of the site can continue.	The approach to decommissioning is set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. When the operational phase ends, the Scheme would be decommissioned. All solar PV modules, mounting poles, cabling, inverters, transformers, BESS equipment, the East Park Energy Substation, and fencing would be removed from the Site and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice and market conditions at that time. The Site would be returned to a condition suitable for return to its original use after decommissioning. On decommissioning the Site will be returned to a condition suitable for return to its original use. Following decommissioning, it is considered likely that some the landscaping works undertaken across the Site would remain in place, and the land would be handed back to the landowner. It is very likely that tree and hedgerow planting would be retained. However, as the land would be handed back to the landowners on completion of decommissioning the longer-term retention of the landscaping improvement works cannot be guaranteed. Similarly, following decommissioning the landowner may or may not retain the permissive footpaths created across the Site. Any requirements to retain access tracks will be discussed and agreed with the landowners as part of the decommissioning process. Decommissioning is expected to take between 12 and 24 months and would be undertaken in phases. An **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan** (oDEMP) ***[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** has been prepared as part of the DCO application. It provides a framework for the management of environmental impacts during the decommissioning phase of the Scheme. The oDEMP will also set out monitoring and auditing activities which would be used to ensure mitigation measures are carried out, recorded and effective.
	2.10.69	Applicants should set out what would be decommissioned and removed from the site at the end of the operational life of the generating station, considering instances where it may be less harmful for the ecology of the site to keep or retain certain types of infrastructure, for example underground cabling, and where there may be socio-economic benefits in retaining site infrastructure after the operational life, such as retaining pathways through the site or a site substation.	

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	2.10.70	In many cases, not all aspects of the proposal may have been settled in precise detail at the point of application. Such aspects may include: • the type, number and dimensions of the panels; • layout and spacing; • the type of inverter or transformer; and • whether storage will be installed (with the option to install further panels as a substitute).	The precise layout of the Scheme and equipment selection has not been finalised. It is therefore essential to provide a degree of flexibility within the DCO to allow the detailed design to react to these variables. The technical assessments within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** have therefore assessed an 'envelope' within which the works will take place, defined using a parameter-based approach as set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement *[EN010141/DR/7.1]***. As such, the ES has been based upon maximum and, where relevant, minimum parameters and defined work areas where the types of development can take place. The design parameters are based on industry knowledge and best practice such that a sufficient degree of flexibility is provided within the DCO. These parameters are considered in detail in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and across the individual assessments within the ES to ensure the reasonable worst-case effects of the Scheme are assessed for each potential receptor, ensuring the 'likely significant effects' are identified.
	2.10.71	Applicants should set out a range of options based on different panel numbers, types and layout, with and without storage.	
	2.10.72	Guidance on how applicants should manage flexibility is set out at Section 2.6 of this NPS.	
Impacts	2.10.74	Applicants should provide information on relevant impacts as directed by this NPS and the Secretary of State.	In accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the Applicant has undertaken an EIA for the Scheme which is reported in the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]**. An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 30th October 2023. The Planning Inspectorate reviewed and consulted on the EIA Scoping Report and published their EIA Scoping Opinion on the 8th December 2023 (the Scoping Opinion) which includes the formal responses received by the Planning Inspectorate from consultees. The ES reports on the likely significant effects of the Scheme including environmental, social and economic effects, as well as the potential cumulative impacts of the Scheme in combination with other consented or emerging developments.
Biodiversity, ecological, geological conservation and water management	2.10.75	Generic environmental, biodiversity, ecology, geological and water management impacts are covered in section 4.3 (Environmental Principles), section 4.6 (Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain), section 5.4 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) and section 5.8 (Flood Risk) of EN-1.	The Applicant has had regard to the relevant sections of NPS EN-1 in Table 1 of this PCD.
	2.10.76	The applicant's ecological assessments should identify any ecological risk from developing on the proposed site.	The Applicant has undertaken comprehensive ecological surveys across the Order Limits to identify ecological species and habitats that could be impacted by the Scheme. The ecological baseline of the site is set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** The scope of ecological surveys and assessment has been agreed through the EIA Scoping Opinion at **ES Vol 2 Appendix 1-2: EIA Scoping Opinion [EN010141/DR/4.2/4.3]** and through further consultation with relevant consultees as set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**.
	2.10.77	Issues that need assessment may include habitats, ground nesting birds, wintering and migratory birds, bats, dormice, reptiles, great crested newts, water voles and badgers.	
	2.10.78	The applicant should use an advising ecologist during the design process to ensure that adverse impacts are avoided, minimised or mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised.	The Applicant has taken an environmentally-led approach to the masterplanning of the Scheme from the inception of the project, as reported in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. This has included identifying from the outset the specific constraints of the Site, the condition and type of habitats present, and the species that these habitats support, or could support. By retaining existing habitats and supplementing them with complimentary habitats the Scheme has taken a holistic approach to ecosystem enhancement and habitat connectivity. The result of the Applicant's approach

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			is that the Scheme is achieving landscape enhancements such as enhanced recreational access to deliver wider environmental benefits and a significant BNG. As noted in previous responses, BNG is not yet in force for DCO applications (expected next year) and as such any gain should be considered a benefit of the Scheme. Notwithdstaing this, the Applicant has made a conscious decision to maximise BNG as part of the Scheme and they are committed to a future BNG of: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Further discussion on this matter is presented in Section 7 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.
	2.10.79	The assessment may be informed by a 'desk study' of existing ecological records, an evaluation of the likely impacts of the solar farm upon ecological features and should specify mitigation to avoid or minimise these impacts, and any further surveys required.	The assessment of impacts on ecological receptors is provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment has been informed by desk study and field work. Specific ecological mitigation measures embedded into the Scheme are set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and wider mitigation measures that protect ecology are set out within the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***, and the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. These mitigation measures include habitat avoidance, mitigation and creation; mitigation measures for protected species; and general mitigation measures to ensure compliance with environmental legislation. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.13]*** in support of their application that sets out how the ecological proposals will be managed post implementation for the lifetime of the Scheme.
	2.10.80	Applicants should consider earthworks associated with construction compounds, access roads and cable trenching.	The works required to construct the Scheme are set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The Applicant has prepared an **outline Soil Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.9]*** that sets out measures which will be adopted to minimise impacts on soil health and minimise the risk of land contamination. The outline Soil Management Plan and the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5],*** in combination**,** set out embedded control measures that will be implemented during the construction phase.
	2.10.81	Where soil stripping occurs, topsoil and subsoil should be stripped, stored, and replaced separately to minimise soil damage and to provide optimal conditions for site restoration. Further details on minimising impacts on soil and soil handling are above at paragraphs 2.10.33 and 2.10.34.	
	2.10.82	Applicants should consider how security and lighting installations may impact on the local ecology. Where pole mounted CCTV facilities are proposed the location of these facilities should be carefully considered to minimise impact. If lighting is necessary, it should be minimised and directed away from areas of likely habitat.	Site-specific security measures are set out in the description of the Scheme at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and include fencing and CCTV. The impacts of site security measures have been fully considered as part of the Ecological Impact Assessment **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]**

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			The **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]***, and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** set out measures that will be adopted to manage impacts to biodiversity through the various phases of project delivery.
	2.10.83	Applicants should consider how site boundaries are managed. If any hedges/scrub are to be removed, further surveys may be necessary to account for impacts. Buffer strips between perimeter fencing and hedges may be proposed, and the construction and design of any fencing should account for enabling mammal, reptile and other fauna access into the site if required to do so in the ecological report.	As set out in **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]** and as implemented by the set boundaries within the **Works Plan [EN010141/DR/2.3]**, the following buffer strips have been adopted as key design parameters: • A 10m buffer between fencing surrounding solar PV modules and non-tidal watercourses; • A 6m buffer between fencing surrounding solar PV modules and hedgerows / areas of substantial vegetation; and • A 10m buffer between fencing surrounding solar PV modules and public rights of way. All habitats proposed for removal have been appropriately assessed and the impacts reported within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** The **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** also sets out how the existing and proposed habitats will be managed post implementation for the lifetime of the Scheme.
	2.10.84	Where a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out this must be submitted alongside the applicant's ES. This will need to consider the impact of drainage. As solar PV panels will drain to the existing ground, the impact will not, in general, be significant.	The Applicant has prepared an ES chapter on flood risk **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which is informed / supplemented by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy as **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. They set out the drainage measures that will be adopted at the detailed design stage for the Scheme. The drainage strategy utilises SuDS principles across the Site and indicates that the drainage from the site would be improved in many regards. Particularly the prevention of channelling that current occurs as a result of over land flows on bare clay soils. In relation to the access tracks, they will be constructed of a porous stone material with lateral ditches / swales to control surface water run-off as required.
	2.10.85	Where access tracks need to be provided, permeable tracks should be used, and localised Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), such as swales and infiltration trenches, should be used to control any run-off where recommended.	
	2.10.86	Given the temporary nature of solar PV farms, sites should be configured or selected to avoid the need to impact on existing drainage systems and watercourses.	The land within the Order Limits is currently drained by a network of ditches and watercourses that form field boundaries, and therefore it is essential that suitable access is provided between parcels. In addition, cabling will need to be provided connecting the Solar PV Array Areas back to the on-site East Park Energy Substation. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-3: Watercourse Crossing Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** provides an Indicative Watercourse Crossing Schedule with supporting figures showing the proposed locations of new and existing watercourse crossings. It confirms that there will be no new culverts proposed as part of the watercourse crossings, with all new crossings to be open span structures. Where existing watercourse crossings need to be widened or are considered to not be capable of supporting the construction vehicles, new open span crossings will be installed.
	2.10.87	Culverting existing watercourses/drainage ditches should be avoided.	
	2.10.88	Where culverting for access is unavoidable, applicants should demonstrate that no reasonable alternatives exist and where necessary it will only be in place temporarily for the construction period.	
	2.10.89	Solar farms have the potential to increase the biodiversity value of a site, especially if the land was previously intensively managed. In some instances, this can result in significant benefits and enhancements beyond Biodiversity Net Gain, which result in wider environmental gains which is encouraged.	The Applicant has planned to achieve environmental gains from the outset of the Scheme. The design team includes Landscape Architects and Ecologists who have developed the **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** to achieve both mitigation of the Scheme's adverse impacts, as well as opportunities for enhancement. Such opportunities have

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	2.10.90	For projects in England, applicants should consider enhancement, management, and monitoring of biodiversity in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	included the retention of public rights of way, provision of new permissive paths(in Site B), retention of existing trees, scrub and hedgerows as far as possible, and provision of new grassland, hedgerow and woodland habitats. Whist it is not currently a mandatory requirement for NSIP Schemes(it is expected to become mandatory for NSIPs from May 2026), for robustness the biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment has been undertaken in accordance with DEFRA's latest Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and the calculation is presented in full within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** confirms that there will be a gain of 79.51% in area-based habitat units, 36.91% in hedgerow units, and 5.95% in watercourse units. While a 10% gain is not achieved in relation to watercourses, the habitat creation measures as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals and to be secured through the **oLEMP [EN010141/DR/7.7]** will enhance the bank top habitat of ditches and watercourses throughout the Site. However, as a result of failures of baseline ditch condition assessment criteria related principally to low water levels and frequent drying (which is outside the control of the Scheme), the bankside habitat enhancement is not taken as enhancing the condition of watercourses within the Metric. Therefore, whilst the Scheme achieves no net loss of watercourse units, the quantitative gain in the Metric does not achieve 10%. The Scheme proposals nonetheless represent a qualitative gain of value to local biodiversity. Overall, it is concluded in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** that the Scheme will deliver a net gain for biodiversity, and that the change in units generated as part of the Scheme are proportionate to the levels of impact, with the Scheme providing other qualitative measures to enhance biodiversity. At the detailed design stage, the Applicant will seek to maximise BNG as far as practicable (as per Design Principle 4.1 secured by the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]**). It may ultimately be possible to achieve a greater BNG for all habitat types compared to the current assessment of the illustrative design. Nonetheless, as the assessment has been based on an illustrative design, out of caution and to avoid any future compliance issue, the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy. Further discussion on this matter is presented in Section 7 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].**
	2.10.92	Applicants should consider whether they need to provide geotechnical and hydrological information (such as identifying the presence of peat at each site) including the risk of landslide connected to any development work.	The Applicant has undertaken desk study and assess the presence of contaminants / ground stability issues within the Order Limits, which is presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 12-1: Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The Stage 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment has involved a walkover of the Site, comprehensive review of historic mapping, review of any historic site investigations (noting there are none). It also

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			includes a review of information relating to potential unexploded ordnance (UXO); environmental information from BBC, HDC and CCC, the EA and other publicly available records. There is sufficient Site information available to characterise the risks presented in conjunction with the Scheme and define the mitigation measures that would be required that is proportionate to the contamination presented. Whilst some potential contamination sources have been identified on Site, they are not significant and are limited to the infilling of former ponds, historic gravel pits or where existing buildings / agricultural activities are being carried out. The required mitigation measures to be employed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases are set out in **outline Soil Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.9]***, as well as the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*,** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. These would be secured by a Requirement of the DCO and the details would be subject to approval by the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). Through the implementation of incorporated and additional mitigation measures there would be no significant residual effects on human health, groundwater, surface water, ecology, land and livestock receptors or buildings/ground stability during the construction phase.
Landscape, visual and residential amenity	2.10.94	The approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large-scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing other onshore energy infrastructure. Solar farms are likely to be in low lying areas of good exposure and as such may have a wider zone of visual influence than other types of onshore energy infrastructure.	The Applicant has prepared a LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition* and includes an assessment of cumulative effects with other projects. The LVIA includes an assessment of the Scheme at the construction operational and decommissioning phases. The LVIA is supported by digitally mapped zones of theoretical visibility for the Scheme, and verifiable visualisations that include photomontages.
	2.10.95	However, whilst it may be the case that the development covers a significant surface area, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography, the area of a zone of visual influence could be appropriately minimised.	
	2.10.96	Landscape and visual impacts should be considered carefully pre-application. Potential impacts on the statutory purposes of nationally designated landscapes should form a part of the pre- application process.	The Site is not located within a National Park or a National Landscape (formerly 'AONBs') or located within the setting of a statutory designated landscape.
	2.10.97	Applicants should carry out a landscape and visual assessment and report it in the ES. Visualisations may be required to demonstrate the effects of a proposed solar farm on the setting of heritage assets and any nearby residential areas or viewpoints.	The Applicant has prepared a LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition*. The LVIA includes an assessment of the Scheme at the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. The LVIA is supported by digitally mapped zones of theoretical visibility for the Scheme, and verifiable visualisations that include photomontages.
	2.10.98	Applicants should follow the criteria for good design set out in Section 4.7 of EN-1 when developing projects and will be expected to direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape and visual impact of solar PV arrays especially within nationally designated landscapes.	As set out above, the Scheme would not be in, or within the zone of influence of, any nationally designated landscape.

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			The approach to the siting and design of the Scheme is set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** and the mitigation measures that have been embedded into the Scheme are set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out the design process that has been followed, which has been informed by design principles, and how this has sought to mitigate the adverse effects of the Scheme. The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** also sets out how opportunities for environmental enhancement and opportunity have been considered as part of the design process.
	2.10.99	Whilst there is an acknowledged need to ensure solar PV installations are adequately secured, required security measures such as fencing should consider the need to minimise the impact on the landscape and visual impact (see paragraphs 2.10.46 – 2.10.48 above).	Site-specific security measures are set out in the description of the Scheme at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and include fencing and CCTV. The impacts of site security measures have been fully considered as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	2.10.100	The applicant should consider as part of the design, layout, construction, and future maintenance plans how to protect and retain, wherever possible, the growth of vegetation on site boundaries, as well as the growth of existing hedges, established vegetation, including mature trees within boundaries. Applicants should also consider opportunities for individual trees within the boundaries to grow on to maturity.	The Applicant has undertaken an **Arboricultural Assessment** of the existing trees and woodlands within the Site **ES Vol 2 Appendix 2-2: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]) [EN010141/DR/7.15]**. Mitigation measures to avoid and minimise adverse effects to trees and woodland are set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]**, the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]**. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** that sets out how existing and proposed trees and woodland will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme.
	2.10.101	The impact of the proposed development on established trees and hedges should be informed by a tree survey and arboricultural/hedge assessment as appropriate.	
Glint and glare	2.10.102	Solar panels are specifically designed to absorb, not reflect, irradiation. However, solar panels may reflect the sun's rays at certain angles, causing glint and glare. Glint is defined as a momentary flash of light that may be produced as a direct reflection of the sun in the solar panel. Glare is a continuous source of excessive brightness experienced by a stationary observer located in the path of reflected sunlight from the face of the panel. The effect occurs when the solar panel is stationed between or at an angle of the sun and the receptor.	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-7: Glint and Glare Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** is based on quantitative analysis where geometric modelling of the Scheme has been undertaken for all mapped receptors to identify the potential for impacts, considering the angle and duration of incidence, and the intensity of the reflection. The Glint and Glare Assessment has assessed impacts on residential, road, and aviation receptors, and identifies the required mitigation to avoid or reduce impacts to an acceptable level. The identified mitigation is secured by the **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]**.
	2.10.103	Applicants should map receptors qualitatively to identify potential glint and glare issues and determine if a glint and glare assessment is necessary as part of the application.	
	2.10.104	When a quantitative glint and glare assessment is necessary, applicants are expected to consider the geometric possibility of glint and glare affecting nearby receptors, and provide an assessment of potential impact and impairment based on the angle and duration of incidence and the intensity of the reflection.	
	2.10.105	The extent of reflectivity analysis required to assess potential impacts will depend on the specific project site and design. This may need to account for 'tracking' panels if they are proposed as these may cause differential diurnal and/or seasonal impacts.	The Scheme is utilising 'fixed' arrays and not 'tracking' arrays. The extent of reflectivity analysis in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-7: Glint and Glare Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** is proportionate to the area in which likely significant adverse effects could occur.

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	2.10.106	When a glint and glare assessment is undertaken, the potential for solar PV panels, frames and supports to have a combined reflective quality may need to be assessed, although the glint and glare of the frames and supports is likely to be significantly less than the panels.	
Cultural Heritage	2.10.107	The impacts of solar PV developments on the historic environment will require expert assessment in most cases and may have effect both above and below ground.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. This includes above and below ground heritage assets, designated and non-designated assets, and the potential for cumulative effects on the wider historic environment.
	2.10.108	Above ground impacts may include the effects on the setting of Listed Buildings and other designated heritage assets as well as on Historic Landscape Character.	
	2.10.109	Below ground impacts, although generally limited, may include direct impacts on archaeological deposits through ground disturbance associated with trenching, cabling, foundations, fencing, temporary haul routes etc.	
	2.10.110	Equally, solar PV developments may have a positive effect, for example archaeological assets may be protected by a solar PV farm as the site is removed from regular ploughing and shoes or low-level piling is stipulated.	
	2.10.111	Generic historic environment impacts are covered in Section 5.9 of EN-1.	
	2.10.112	Applicant assessments should be informed by information from Historic Environment Records (HERs) or the local authority.	The Applicant has consulted the BBHER)and the CHET as part of the assessment process, as well as the National Heritage List for England (maintained by Historic England). A list of data sources is provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. A comprehensive gazetteer of heritage assets and events is provided as **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-1: Gazetteer of Heritage Assets and Events [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.
	2.10.113	Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, the applicant should submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be carried out using expertise where necessary and in consultation with the local planning authority, and should identify archaeological study areas and propose appropriate schemes of investigation, and design measures, to ensure the protection of relevant heritage assets.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated supporting ES appendices sets out the approach that has been carried out to the assessment of buried archaeology and heritage features. This has been agreed in consultation with Historic England, and the heritage / archaeology offices within BBC, HDC and CCC. The assessment has included a desk-based assessment, site wide geophysical assessment and trial trenching, the scope of which was agreed with the abovementioned authorities and deemed proportionate to the findings of the geophysical assessment. The assessment has been carried out within the order limits, and no need has been identified to extend the assessment beyond the order limits.
	2.10.114	In some instances, field studies may include investigative work (and may include trial trenching beyond the boundary of the proposed site) to assess the impacts of any ground disturbance, such as proposed cabling, substation foundations or mounting supports for solar panels on archaeological assets.	
	2.10.115	The extent of investigative work should be proportionate to the sensitivity of, and extent of, proposed ground disturbance in the associated study area.	

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	2.10.116	Applicants should take account of the results of historic environment assessments in their design proposal.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out the design process that has been followed, which has been informed by design principles, and how this has sought to mitigate the adverse effects of the Scheme. The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** also sets out how opportunities for environmental enhancement and opportunity have been considered as part of the design process.
	2.10.117	Applicants should consider what steps can be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting.	As presented in in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Setting Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Applicant has identified a significant (in EIA terms) operational phase effect upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D, which is assessed as resulting in 'less than substantial harm' of low to mid-level upon the asset. The Applicant has also assessed the impact of the Scheme upon designated heritage assets. Minor adverse effects (i.e. not significant in EIA terms) that equate to 'less than substantial harm' are predicted upon the settings of designated heritage assets as is detailed in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2**] and in Paragraphs 6.8.54 to 6.8.61 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The predicted levels of 'less than substantial harm' are at the low to mid end of the scale and it is considered that there is no potential to further mitigate these effects (which are not significant in EIA terms). Paragraphs 6.8.62 to 6.8.66 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** note that upon the completion of the decommissioning the long-term effects of the operational phase on the setting of assets would be removed, with the setting of those assets restored to the current baseline condition with the exception of the elements of new green infrastructure which would be left in place at the point of decommissioning. An **oHES [EN010141/DR/7.16]**, has also been produced which contains recommended measures for making a positive contribution to the historic environment. These measures are also presented in Paragraphs 6.7.33 to 6.7.36 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. In accordance with paragraph 5.9.32 of NPS EN-1, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Scheme is CNP infrastructure that would deliver substantial public benefits. This is supported by paragraph 4.2.16 of NPS EN-1 which confirms that CNP infrastructure should be treated as meeting any test which requires a clear outweighing of harm.
	2.10.118	As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large-scale solar farms which depending on their scale, design, and prominence, may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset.	
	2.10.119	Applicants may need to include visualisations to demonstrate the effects of a proposed solar farm on the setting of heritage assets.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** is supported by viewpoints and verifiable visualisations to inform the assessment of visual effects; many of these viewpoints relate to heritage assets and have informed the assessment of impacts on the setting of heritage assets.
Construction including traffic and transport	2.10.120	Modern solar farms are large sites that are mainly comprised of small structures that can be transported separately and constructed on-site, with developers designating a compound on-site for the delivery and assemblage of the necessary components.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 9: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** set out the access arrangements that would be put in place for the construction and operational phases of the Scheme. The anticipated traffic generation is

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noise and vibration	2.10.121	Many solar farms will be sited in areas served by a minor road network. Public perception of the construction phase of solar farms will derive mainly from the effects of traffic movements, which is likely to involve smaller vehicles than typical onshore energy infrastructure but may be more voluminous.	provided, with staff trips expected to be made by a combination of cars and minibuses. Temporary parking would be provided within the Order Limits for the duration of the construction phase. The ES Chapter concludes that the anticipated effect of the Scheme during the construction phase regarding Traffic and Transport would be negligible or minor in the context of Driver Delay, Accidents & Safety, Pedestrian Delay, Severance, NMU Amenity and Fear & Intimidation, and neutral in relation to public transport. The residual effects are therefore negligible, and not significant in EIA terms. The TA concludes that the Scheme will result in no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and that no severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be created by the Scheme. An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. The Scheme would not require the development of additional transport infrastructure.
	2.10.122	Generic traffic and transport impacts are covered Section 5.14 of EN-1.	
	2.10.123	Applicants should assess the various potential routes to the site for delivery of materials and components where the source of the materials is known at the time of the application, and select the route that is the most appropriate.	
	2.10.124	Where the exact location of the source of construction materials, such as crushed stone or concrete is not be known at the time of the application, applicants should assess the worst-case impact of additional vehicles on the likely potential rout	
	2.10.125	Applicants should ensure all sections of roads and bridges on the proposed delivery route can accommodate the weight and volume of the loads and width of vehicles. Although unlikely, where modifications to roads and/or bridges are required, these should be identified, and potential effects addressed in the ES.	The Site is located proximate to the Strategic Road Network (the A1) and the proposed site access has been assessed for its suitability for use by 'abnormal indivisible load' (AIL). The routing for AILs is set out within the **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.3]***.
	2.10.126	Where a cumulative impact is likely because multiple energy infrastructure developments are proposing to use a common port and/or access route and pass through the same towns and villages, applicants should include a cumulative transport assessment as part of the ES. This should consider the impacts of abnormal traffic movements relating to the project in question in combination with those from any other relevant development. Consultation with the relevant local highways authorities is likely to be necessary.	The TA **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** includes an assessment of the potential highway impacts of the Scheme in combination with other committed developments. The **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]** also includes provisions to create a working group that will facilitate liaison between the various infrastructure projects being constructed in the local area, the local highways authority and National Highways.
Agricultural land classification and land type	2.10.127	The Defra Construction code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites provides guidance on ensuring that damage to soil during construction is mitigated and minimised. Mitigation measures focus on minimising damage to soil that remains in place, and minimising damage to soil being excavated and stockpiled. The measures aim to preserve soil health and soil structure to minimise soil carbon loss and maintain water infiltration and soil biodiversity. Mitigation measures for agricultural soils include use of green cover, multispecies cover crops - especially during the winter- minimising compaction and adding soil organic matter.	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Soil Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.9]*** that sets out measures which will be adopted to minimise impacts on soil health and minimise the risk of land contamination. The outline Soil Management Plan and the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** together set out embedded control measures that will be implemented during the construction phase.
Biodiversity and ecological conservation	2.10.128	In England, proposed enhancements should take account of the above factors and as set out in Sections 4.6 and 5.4 of EN-1 aim to achieve environmental and biodiversity net gain in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	The Applicant has taken an environmentally led approach to the masterplanning of the Scheme from the inception of the project, as reported in the **Design Approach Document** ***[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. This has included identifying from the outset the specific constraints of the Site, the condition and type of habitats present, and the species that these habitats support, or could support. By retaining existing

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	2.10.129	This might include maintaining or extending existing habitats and potentially creating new important habitats, for example by installing cultivated strips/plots for rare arable plants, rough grassland margins, bumble bee plant mixes, and wild bird seed mixes.	habitats and supplementing them with complimentary habitats the Scheme has taken a holistic approach to ecosystem enhancement and habitat connectivity. As noted in previous responses, BNG is not yet in force for DCO applications (expected next year) and as such any gain should be considered a benefit of the Scheme. Notwithdstaing this, the Applicant has made a conscious decision to maximise BNG as part of the Scheme and they are committed to delivering at least: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy. Further discussion on this matter is presented in Section 7 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].**
	2.10.130	Applicants are advised to develop an ecological monitoring programme to monitor impacts upon the flora of the site and upon any particular ecological receptors (such as bats and wintering birds). Results of the monitoring will then inform any changes needed to the land management of the site, including, if appropriate, any livestock grazing regime.	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** which sets out a programme for monitoring and review of the proposed ecological management actions.
Landscape, visual and residential amenity	2.10.131	Applicants should consider the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges, trees and woodlands.	The LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that there would be residual significant adverse landscape and visual effects for receptors within and around the boundary of the Site. As noted at paragraph 5.10.13 of NPS EN-1, this is not uncommon for national scale energy infrastructure. As set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** and in the Planning Statement **[EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Applicant has followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and reduce effects as far as practicable in the context of the operational requirements of the development. **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** has been produced, which incorporates measures to achieve the relevant design principles for the Scheme, including (but not limited to) the following mitigation measures: • Retention of existing vegetation cover that defines character and provides visual screening. • Containment of development within established field boundaries to retain the existing landscape pattern. • Provision of generous development-free buffers alongside existing landscape features, including public rights of way. • New planting of trees and hedgerows that is consistent with the landscape character of the Order Limits and that provides further screening.

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			The proposed planting would be managed in accordance with the **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]***.
	2.10.132	Applicants should aim to minimise the use and height of security fencing. Where possible applicants should utilise existing features, such as hedges or landscaping, to assist in site security, or screen security fencing.	Site-specific security measures are set out in the description of the Scheme at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and include fencing and CCTV. The impacts of site security measures have been fully considered as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
	2.10.133	Applicants should minimise the use of security lighting. Any lighting should utilise a passive infra-red (PIR) technology and should be designed and installed in a manner which minimises impact.	
Glint and glare	2.10.134	Applicants should consider using, and in some cases the Secretary of State may require, solar panels to comprise of (or be covered with) anti-glare/anti-reflective coating with a specified angle of maximum reflection attenuation for the lifetime of the permission.	Table 2-1 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** includes a design parameter that requires the solar PV modules to have an anti-reflective coating.
	2.10.135	Applicants may consider using screening between potentially affected receptors and the reflecting panels to mitigate the effects.	The Glint and Glare Assessment has assessed impacts on residential, road, and aviation receptors, and identifies the required mitigation to avoid or reduce impacts to an acceptable level. The identified mitigation has been incorporated into the Scheme and will be secured through the **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]***.
	2.10.136	Applicants may consider adjusting the azimuth alignment of, or changing the elevation tilt angle of, a solar panel within the economically viable range, to alter the angle of incidence. In practice this is unlikely to remove the potential impact altogether but in marginal cases may contribute to a mitigation strategy.	Table 2-1 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** includes a design parameter in relation to the orientation of the panels to avoid and reduce glint and glare impacts for road users of the M56 motorway. It is assumed that azimuth angle would be between 175° and 185° allowing a degree of flexibility in the detailed design.
Cultural Heritage	2.10.137	The ability of the applicants to microsite specific elements of the proposed development during the construction phase should be an important consideration by the Secretary of State when assessing the risk of damage to archaeology.	The precise layout of the Scheme and equipment selection has not been finalised. It is therefore essential to provide a degree of flexibility within the DCO to allow the detailed design to react to these variables. The technical assessments within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** have therefore assessed an 'envelope' within which the works will take place, defined using a parameter-based approach as set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Parameters Statement *[EN010141/DR/7.1]***. As such, the ES has been based upon maximum and, where relevant, minimum parameters and defined work areas where the types of development can take place. The design parameters are based on industry knowledge and best practice such that a sufficient degree of flexibility is provided within the DCO. These parameters are considered in detail in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and across the individual assessments within the ES to ensure the reasonable worst-case effects of the Scheme are assessed for each potential receptor. This ensures the 'likely significant effects' are identified. As presented in in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Setting Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Applicant has identified a significant (in EIA terms) operational phase effect upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D, which is assessed as resulting in 'less than substantial harm' of low to mid-level upon the asset.
	2.10.138	Where requested by the applicant, the Secretary of State should consider granting consents which allow for the micrositing within a specified tolerance of elements of the permitted infrastructure, so that precise locations can be amended during the construction phase if unforeseen circumstances, such as the discovery of previously unknown archaeology, arise.	

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			The Applicant has also assessed the impact of the Scheme upon designated heritage assets. Minor adverse effects (i.e. not significant in EIA terms) that equate to 'less than substantial harm' are predicted upon the settings of designated heritage assets as is detailed in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and in Paragraphs 6.8.54 to 6.8.61 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The predicted levels of 'less than substantial harm' are at the low to mid end of the scale and it is considered that there is no potential to further mitigate these effects (which are not significant in EIA terms). Paragraphs 6.8.62 to 6.8.66 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** note that upon the completion of the decommissioning the long-term effects of the operational phase on the setting of assets would be removed, with the setting of those assets restored to the current baseline condition with the exception of the elements of new green infrastructure which would be left in place at the point of decommissioning. An **oHES [EN010141/DR/7.16]**, has also been produced which contains recommended measures for making a positive contribution to the historic environment. These measures are also presented in Paragraphs 6.7.33 to 6.7.36 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** In accordance with paragraph 5.9.32 of NPS EN-1, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Scheme is CNP infrastructure that would deliver substantial public benefits. This is supported by paragraph 4.2.16 of NPS EN-1 which confirms that CNP infrastructure should be treated as meeting any test which requires a clear outweighing of harm.
Construction including traffic and transport noise and vibration	2.10.139	In some cases, the local highway authority may request that the Secretary of State impose controls on the number of vehicle movements to and from the solar farm site in a specified period during its construction and, possibly, on the routeing of such movements particularly by heavy vehicles.	An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. Forecast vehicle movements during the construction phase are set out within the TA **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. It concludes that impact of the Scheme on the adopted highway network would not be severe or significant in EIA terms.
	2.10.140	Where the Secretary of State agrees that this is necessary, requirements could be imposed on development consent.	
	2.10.141	Where cumulative effects on the local road network or residential amenity are predicted from multiple solar farm developments, it may be appropriate for applicants for various projects to work together to ensure that the number of abnormal loads and deliveries are minimised, and the timings of deliveries are managed and coordinated to ensure that disruption to residents and other highway users is reasonably minimised.	The TA **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** includes an assessment of the potential highway impacts of the Scheme in combination with other consented developments, comprising: • Land South of High Wood, Solar Farm (application ref. 22/01813/FUL); • Land to North and South of Bushmead Road, Solar Farm (application ref. 24/00858/MAF); • Land South of Bushmead Road, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (application ref. 22/01828/MAF). • A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet; and • East-West Rail.
	2.10.142	It may also be appropriate for the highway authority to set limits for, and coordinate these deliveries through, active management of the delivery schedules through the abnormal load approval process.	

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			An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan** ***[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. It also sets out routing plans and timings for deliveries to minimise impacts on the local highway network. The Transport Assessment **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** concludes that there would be no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and no severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be created by the Scheme.
	2.10.143	Once consent for a scheme has been granted, applicants should liaise with the relevant local highway authority (or other coordinating body) regarding the start of construction and the broad timing of deliveries. Applicants may need to agree a planning obligation to secure appropriate measures, including restoration of roads and verges.	An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. The outline CTMP will be developed into a final CTMP as a requirement of the DCO, and this CTMP will require approval of the Local Highway Authority prior to construction.
	2.10.144	Further, it may be appropriate for any non-permanent highway improvements carried out for the development (such as temporary road widening) to be made available for use by other subsequent solar farm developments.	The Applicant is not proposing any temporary or permanent improvements to the public highway.
Agriculture land classification and land type	2.10.145	The Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The Secretary of State should ensure that the applicant has put forward appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on soils or soil resources.	The Scheme has followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts on land of a higher agricultural value where possible, beginning with the site selection stage reported in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2**]. The site identification exercise firstly considered brownfield / previously developed land within a 15km search radius of the point of connection at the Eaton Socon Substation. This land was not availiable, and the assessment ultimately concluded that that there was no Search Zone around the point of connection that was not constrained in some way, and that only by taking a balanced consideration of technical and environmental factors was it possible to select a search zone for the Site. The key determining factor in recommending the final Search Zone for the Site was that it was likely to have the most straightforward grid connection, which in turn would avoid and reduce environmental impacts, affect less landowners, and ensure that the Scheme remains commercially viable. In terms of agricultural land classification, it was established that the Site would be likely to include some areas of BMV land, but that with the evidence available it was unlikely to contain significantly greater or lesser extents of BMV land than any other area within 15km of the point of connection. NPS EN-3 is clear however (Paragraph 2.10.29) that '*land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location'*. The above measures set out the steps taken to avoid development of BMV land as far as practicable, being the first step in the mitigation hierarchy. To reduce and minimise impacts to soils, the mounting structures for the solar arrays utilise ram-driven posts for the arrays which do not require excavation, minimising soil disturbance and enabling reinstatement at decommissioning. The Applicant has prepared an **outline Soil Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.9]** that sets out how soils will be managed throughout the lifetime of the Scheme to minimise adverse impacts, including by committing to best practice guidance for soil handling. Mitigation measures are also set out within Section 13.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. In addition to the above, the Applicant has also partnered with Rothamsted Research to undertake scientific research on co-locating agricultural production with solar generation in the UK. This will include research into soil conditions across the Site over the operational phase of the Scheme. The

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			research proposed as part of the 'Agrisolar Research Area' in East Park Site D will enhance an understanding of 'agrivoltaics' and their application within the UK. Finally, and as set out in more detail in the response to paragraph 5.11.34 of NPS EN-1, the Scheme would only result in permanent adverse impact to approximately 5.76 hectares of best and most versatile land. The remainder of the best and most versatile (Grade 2 and Grade 3a) land within the Site would not be permanently adversely impacted by the Scheme and could be easily reverted to its existing agricultural condition upon completion, with anticipated benefits in relation to soil structure and resources.
Project lifetime and decommissioning	2.10.146	The Secretary of State should ensure that the applicant has put forward outline plans for decommissioning the generating station when no longer in use and restoring the land to a suitable use (taking into account paragraphs 2.10.68 and 2.10.69).	The Applicant has prepared an **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** which sets out the principles that will be followed in the decommissioning of the Scheme. The outline DEMP will be developed into a final detailed DEMP as a requirement of the DCO. The DEMP will require approval of the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of decommissioning works.
	2.10.147	Where the consent for a solar farm is to be time-limited, the DCO should impose a requirement setting that time-limit from the date the solar farm starts to generate electricity.	The Applicant is applying for the Scheme with a time-limited consent of 40 years for the operational phase. It is a Requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** that decommissioning of the Scheme must commence "no later than 40 years following the date of the final commissioning of Work No 1…".
	2.10.148	Such a requirement should also secure the decommissioning of the generating station after the expiration of its permitted operation to ensure that inoperative plant is removed after its operational life.	
	2.10.149	An upper limit of 40 years is typical, although applicants may seek consent without a time period or for differing time-periods for operation.	
	2.10.150	The time limited nature of the solar farm, where a time limit is sought as a condition of consent, is likely to be an important consideration for the Secretary of State.	
	2.10.151	The Secretary of State should consider the period of time the applicant is seeking to operate the generating station, as well as the extent to which the site will return to its original state, when assessing impacts such as landscape and visual effects and potential effects on the settings of heritage assets and nationally designated landscapes.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 4: EIA Methodology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out that the assessment of effects is structured around the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. The temporal scope of potential impacts and effects is therefore considered as part of the EIA.
Biodiversity, ecological, geological conservation and water management	2.10.154	Water management is a critical component of site design for ground mount solar plants. Where previous management of the site has involved intensive agricultural practice, solar sites can deliver significant ecosystem services value in the form of drainage, flood attenuation, natural wetland habitat, and water quality management.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of impacts and effects on the water environment and is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.13]*** sets out the measures by which the land and habitats will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme.
	2.10.155	The Secretary of State must consider the worst-case effects in its consideration of the application and consent.	The precise layout of the Scheme and equipment selection has not been finalised. It is therefore essential to provide a degree of flexibility within the DCO to allow the detailed design to react to these variables.

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			The technical assessments within the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** have therefore assessed an 'envelope' within which the works will take place, defined using a parameter-based approach as set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement *[EN010141/DR/7.1]***. As such, the ES has been based upon maximum and, where relevant, minimum parameters and defined work areas where the types of development can take place. The design parameters are based on industry knowledge and best practice such that a sufficient degree of flexibility is provided within the DCO. These parameters are considered in detail in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and across the individual assessments within the ES to ensure the reasonable worst-case effects of the Scheme are assessed for each potential receptor. This ensures the 'likely significant effects' are identified.
	2.10.156	Where developments are proposed on peat, to ensure the development will result in minimal disruption to the ecology, or release of CO2, and that the carbon balance savings of the scheme are maximised, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the solar farm layout and construction methods have been designed to minimise soil disturbance during construction and maintenance of roads, tracks, and other infrastructure and in England should take into account the policies set out in the England Peat Action Plan 2021. Where developments are located in Wales, the Secretary of State may take into account the policies set out in the National Peatlands Action Programme, 2020-2025 (cyfoethnaturiol.cymru) and Future Wales the National Plan 2040 - Policy 18.	As evidenced in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 12-1: Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** there are no peat soils within the Order Limits.
Landscape, visual and residential amenity	2.10.157	The Secretary of State will consider the landscape and visual impact of any proposed solar PV farm, taking account of any sensitive visual receptors, and the effect of the development on landscape character, together with the possible cumulative effect with any existing or proposed development. Nationally designated landscapes (National Parks, The Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty) are afforded extra protection due their statutory purpose. Development in these areas needs to satisfy policy as set out in EN-1 Section 5.10.	The Applicant has prepared a LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition*. The LVIA has considered effects upon the landscape fabric of the Order Limits, upon the landscape character of the Study Area, and upon views. Effects have been assessed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. The LVIA concludes that whilst there would be some likely significant adverse effects due to the change experienced from parts of the footpath network, in most cases these would last for a limited period only, with longer-term effects not significant. These adverse effects would be balanced by the benefits of the overall improved experience of the landscape brought about by the enhanced access proposals. The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** sets out the need and benefits of the Scheme.
Glint and glare	2.10.158	Solar PV panels are designed to absorb, not reflect, irradiation. However, the Secretary of State should assess the potential impact of glint and glare on nearby homes, motorists, public rights of way, and aviation infrastructure (including aircraft departure and arrival flight paths).	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-7: Glint and Glare Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** has assessed impacts on residential, road, and aviation receptors, and identifies the required mitigation to avoid or reduce impacts to an acceptable level. The identified mitigation is secured by the **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]**.
	2.10.159	Whilst there is some evidence that glint and glare from solar farms can be experienced by pilots and air traffic controllers in certain conditions, there is no evidence that glint and glare from solar farms results in significant impairment on aircraft safety. Therefore, unless a significant impairment can be demonstrated, the Secretary of State is unlikely to give	

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		any more than limited weight to claims of aviation interference because of glint and glare from solar farms.	
Cultural Heritage	2.10.160	Solar farms are generally consented on the basis that they will be time-limited in operation. The Secretary of State should therefore consider the length of time for which consent is sought when considering the impacts of any indirect effect on the historic environment, such as effects on the setting of designated heritage assets.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 4: EIA Methodology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out that the assessment of effects is structured around the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. The temporal scope of potential impacts and effects is therefore considered as part of the EIA.
Construction including traffic and transport, noise and vibration	2.10.161	Once solar farms are in operation, traffic movements to and from the site are generally very light, in some instances as little as a few visits each month by a light commercial vehicle or car. Should there be a need to replace machine components, this may generate heavier commercial vehicle movements, but these are likely to be infrequent.	The TA **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** concludes that the Scheme would result in no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and no significant residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be created by the Scheme. An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 10-1: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.2]** considers the noise and vibration effects of construction activities, and ancillary activities such as increased traffic movements through the construction period. The assessment concludes that these effects would be negligible and not significant.
	2.10.162	The Secretary of State is unlikely to give any more than limited weight to traffic and transport noise and vibration impacts from the operational phase of a project.	

4.0 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR ELECTRICITY NETWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE (EN-5)

4.1.1 Table 3 sets out policy requirements from the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5).

Table 3: National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Section 1: Introduction			
Infrastructure covered by this NPS	1.6.4	In addition, this NPS will apply to other kinds of electricity networks infrastructure including offshore transmission of any type (defined at section 2.12.4), underground cables at any voltage, associated infrastructure as referred to above and lower voltage overhead lines, where that infrastructure becomes subject to the 2008 Act in the following circumstances: i. if it constitutes associated development for which consent is sought along with an NSIP such as an offshore wind generating station or relevant overhead line[4]; or ii. if the Secretary of State gives a direction under Section 35 of the 2008 Act (for developments which, when completed, will be wholly in one or more of the areas specified in subsection 35(3)) that it should be treated as an NSIP and requires a development consent order (DCO). *[4] If an associated development, applicants should also refer to the relevant technology specific NPS, for example EN-3 should also be referred to when a project is associated with an offshore wind generating station.*	Work No. 4 of Schedule 1 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** allows for the construction of a 400 kV below ground electrical cable connection to the National Grid's Eaton Socon Substation. A description of the proposed connection is provided in **ES Vol 1Chapter 2 The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. Work No. 4 therefore meets the definition set by paragraph 1.6.4(i) of NPS EN-5, and as such NPS EN-5 applies to this component of the Scheme.
Section 2: Assessment and Technology-Specific Information			
Factors influencing site selection and design	2.2.2	Siting is determined by: • the location of new generating stations or other infrastructure requiring connection to the network, and/or • system capacity and resilience requirements determined by the Electricity System Operator.	The Site is located proximate to the point of connection at National Grid's Eaton Socon Substation with the site areas for the solar development separated by agricultural land. The routing of Work No. 4 has therefore been dictated by the positioning of the on-site East Park Energy Substation. The factors influencing the site selection of the East Park Energy Substation and the alternatives considered are set out in Table 3-1 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3 Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, and in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**. Consideration was given to providing either an underground or overhead grid connection, and the advantages and disadvantages of each are set out within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3 Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The below ground grid connection was selected as the preferred option and to minimise the visual effect of an above ground connection.
	2.2.3	These twin constraints, coupled with the government's legislative commitment to net zero by 2050, strategic commitment to new interconnectors with neighbouring North Seas countries5 and an ambition of up to 50GW of offshore wind generation by 2030, means that significant new electricity networks infrastructure is required, including in areas with comparatively little build-out to date.	
	2.2.4	However, a strategic and holistic approach to onshore and offshore network planning, as set out in paragraph 1.1.6, will identify the most efficient way of meeting decarbonisation targets and should reduce the overall amount of network infrastructure required.	

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	2.2.5	Additionally, applicants retain control in managing the identification of routing and site selection between the identified initiating and terminating points or within the development zone6.	
	2.2.7	The connection between the initiating and terminating points of a proposed new electricity line will often not be via the most direct route. Siting constraints, such as engineering, environmental or community considerations will be important in determining a feasible route.	
	2.2.8	There will usually be a degree of flexibility in the location of the development's associated substations, and applicants should consider carefully their location, as well as their design.	
	2.2.9	In particular, the applicant should consider such characteristics as the local topography, the possibilities for screening of the infrastructure and/or other options to mitigate any impacts.	
	2.2.10	As well as having duties under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989, (in relation to developing and maintaining an economical and efficient network), applicants must take into account Schedule 9 to the Electricity Act 1989, which places a duty on all transmission and distribution licence holders, in formulating proposals for new electricity networks infrastructure, to "have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and …do what [they] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects."7	
Climate change adaptation and resilience	2.3.1	Section 4.9 of EN-1 sets out the generic considerations that applicants and the Secretary of State should take into account in order to ensure that electricity networks infrastructure is resilient to the effects of climate change.	The climate change assessment (**ES Vol 1 Chapter 15: Climate Change [EN010141/DR/6.1]**) considers the resilience of the Scheme to the projected changes in climate, measures taken to mitigate the impacts, and the impact of the Scheme on climate change. It concludes that the Scheme is resilient to the effects of climate change and no additional mitigation measures are recommended.
	2.3.2	As climate change is likely to increase risks to the resilience of some of this infrastructure, from flooding for example, or in situations where it is located near the coast or an estuary or is underground, applicants should in particular set out to what extent the proposed development is expected to be vulnerable, and, as appropriate, how it has been designed to be resilient to: • flooding, particularly for substations that are vital to the network; and especially in light of changes to groundwater levels resulting from climate change; • the effects of wind and storms on overhead lines; • higher average temperatures leading to increased transmission losses; • earth movement or subsidence caused by flooding or drought (for underground cables); and	

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		• coastal erosion – for the landfall of offshore transmission cables and their associated substations in the inshore and coastal locations respectively.	
	2.3.3	Section 4.9 of EN-1 advises that the resilience of the project to the effects of climate change must be assessed in the Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying an application. For example, future increased risk of flooding would be covered in any flood risk assessment (see Sections 5.8 in EN-1).	
Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain	2.5.1	When planning and evaluating the proposed development's contribution to environmental and biodiversity net gain, it will be important – for both the applicant and the Secretary of State – to supplement the generic guidance set out in EN-1 (Section 4.5) with recognition that the linear nature of electricity networks infrastructure can allow for excellent opportunities to: i. reconnect important habitats via green corridors, biodiversity stepping zones, and reestablishment of appropriate hedgerows; and/or ii. ii. connect people to the environment, for instance via footpaths and cycleways constructed in tandem with environmental enhancements.	The Applicant has planned to achieve environmental gains from the outset of the Scheme. The design team includes Landscape Architects and Ecologists who have developed the **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** to achieve both mitigation of the Scheme's adverse impacts, as well as opportunities for enhancement. Such opportunities have included the retention of public rights of way, provision of new permissive paths(in Site B), retention of existing trees, scrub and hedgerows as far as possible, and provision of new grassland, hedgerow and woodland habitats. Whist it is not currently a mandatory requirement for NSIP Schemes(it is expected to become mandatory for NSIPs from May 2026), for robustness the biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment has been undertaken in accordance with DEFRA's latest Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and the calculation is presented in full within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** confirms that there will be a gain of 79.51% in area-based habitat units, 36.91% in hedgerow units, and 5.95% in watercourse units. While a 10% gain is not achieved in relation to watercourses, the habitat creation measures as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals and to be secured through the **oLEMP [EN010141/DR/7.7]** will enhance the bank top habitat of ditches and watercourses throughout the Site. However, as a result of failures of baseline ditch condition assessment criteria related principally to low water levels and frequent drying (which is outside the control of the Scheme), the bankside habitat enhancement is not taken as enhancing the condition of watercourses within the Metric. Therefore, whilst the Scheme achieves no net loss of watercourse units, the quantitative gain in the Metric does not achieve 10%. The Scheme proposals nonetheless represent a qualitative gain of value to local biodiversity. Overall, it is concluded in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** that the Scheme will deliver a net gain for biodiversity, and that the change in units generated as part of the Scheme are proportionate to the levels of impact, with the Scheme providing other qualitative measures to enhance biodiversity. At the detailed design stage the Applicant will seek to maximise BNG as far as practicable (as per Design Principle 4.1 secured by the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]**). It may ultimately be possible to achieve a greater BNG for all habitat types compared to the current assessment of the illustrative design. Nonetheless, as the assessment has been based on an illustrative design, out of caution and to avoid any future compliance issue, the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units.

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			This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy. Further discussion on this matter is presented in Section 7 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].**
Land Rights and Land Interests	2.6.1	In order to be lawfully able to install, inspect, maintain, repair, adjust, alter, replace or remove an electricity line (above or below ground), its related equipment (such as monopoles, pylons/transmission towers, transformers and cables), and/or its associated mitigation or enhancement schemes, applicants must: i. own the land on, over, or under which the relevant activity is to take place; or ii. hold sufficient rights over or interests in that land (typically in the form of an easement); or iii. have permission for the activity from the present owner or occupier of that land (typically in the form of a wayleave).	Aside from the land at National Grid's Eaton Socon Substation, all the land required to deliver Work No. 4 will be within the control of the Applicant through the option agreements they have progressed with landowners. The Applicant is seeking to reach a voluntary agreements in respect of the land at National Grid's Substation. They will also be seeking to agree a SOCG with the National Grid following submission of their DCO application. The Applicant has nonetheless included for compulsory acquisition of rights within the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure that Work No. 4 remains deliverable.
	2.6.2	Where the applicant does not own or wish to own the land in question, it should try to reach a voluntary agreement giving it sufficient rights and/or permissions to undertake the relevant work.	
	2.6.3	As a last resort, where it does not succeed in reaching the agreement that it requires, the network company may, as part of its application to the Secretary of State, seek to acquire rights compulsorily over the land in question by means of a provision in the DCO.	
	2.6.4	In such cases (i.e. where the compulsory acquisition of rights is sought) permanent arrangements are strongly preferred over voluntary wayleaves (which could, for example, be terminable on notice by the landowner) in virtue of their greater reliability and economic efficiency and reflecting the importance of the relevant infrastructure to the nation's net zero goals.	
	2.6.5	The applicant may also seek the compulsory acquisition of land. This will not normally be necessary where lines and cables are installed but may be sought where other forms of electricity networks infrastructure (such as new substations) are required.	
	2.6.6	As detailed in Section 4.1.8 of EN-1, where the use of land at a specific location is required to facilitate the development by providing for mitigation, landscape enhancement and biodiversity net gain, an applicant may, as part of its application to the Secretary of State, seek the compulsory acquisition of that land, or rights over that land. The Secretary of State will consider any such application under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008 and any associated guidance.	The Applicant has included compulsory acquisition powers for mitigation and landscape enhancement, as shown on the **Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker [EN010141/DR/4.4]** the Applicant has demonstrated that it meets the tests for compulsory acquisition in the **Statement of Reasons [EN010141/DR/4.1].**

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Holistic Planning	2.7.1	EN-1 explains in Section 4.10 that the Planning Act 2008 aims to create a holistic planning regime, such that the cumulative effects of the same project can be considered together. Co-ordinated applications typically bring economic efficiencies and reduced environmental impact.	As set in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, this application for development consent includes for all infrastructure required to construct and operate the Scheme.
	2.7.2	Accordingly, the government envisages that, wherever reasonably possible, applications for new generating stations and their related infrastructure should be contained in a single application to the Secretary of State. However, a consolidated approach of this kind may not always be possible, nor represent the most efficient strategy for delivery of new infrastructure.	
Horlock Rules	2.9.18	The Horlock Rules – guidelines for the design and siting of substations – were established by National Grid in 2009 in pursuance of its duties under Schedule 9 to the Electricity Act 1989. These principles should be embodied in applicants' proposals for the infrastructure associated with new overhead lines.	Section 5.7 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out the Applicant's approach to addressing the Horlock Rules.
	2.9.19	In brief, the Horlock Rules state that applicants should: • consider environmental issues from the earliest stage to balance the technical benefits and capital cost requirements for new developments against the consequential environmental effects in order to keep adverse effects to a reasonably practicable minimum. • seek to avoid altogether internationally and nationally designated areas of the highest amenity, cultural or scientific value by the overall planning of the system connection. • protect as far as reasonably practicable areas of local amenity value, important existing habitats and landscape features including ancient woodland, historic hedgerows, surface and ground water sources and nature conservation areas. • take advantage of the screening provided by land form and existing features and the potential use of site layout and levels to keep intrusion into surrounding areas to a reasonably practicable minimum. • keep the visual, noise and other environmental effects to a reasonably practicable minimum. • consider the land use effects of the proposal when planning the siting of substations or extensions. • consider the options available for terminal towers, equipment, buildings and ancillary development appropriate to individual locations, seeking to keep effects to a reasonably practicable minimum. • use space effectively to limit the area required for development consistent with appropriate mitigation measures and to minimise the adverse effects. • make the design of access roads, perimeter fencing, earth-shaping, planting and ancillary development an integral part of the site layout and design, so as to fit in with the surroundings.	

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		• in open landscape especially, high voltage line entries should be kept, as far as possible, visually separate from low voltage lines and other overhead lines so as to avoid a confusing appearance. • study the inter-relationship between towers and substation structures and background and foreground features so as to reduce the prominence of structures from main viewpoints. Where practicable the exposure of terminal towers on prominent ridges should be minimised by siting towers against a background of trees rather than open skylines.	
Noise and Vibration	2.9.37	Audible noise effects can also arise from substation equipment such as transformers, quadrature boosters and mechanically switched capacitors.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that the Scheme has been designed to operate such that it complies with all appropriate and relevant noise standards and guidance.
	2.9.38	Transformers are installed at many substations, and generate low frequency hum. Whether the noise can be heard outside a substation depends on a number of factors, including transformer type and the level of noise attenuation present (either engineered intentionally or provided by other structures).	
	2.9.39	For the assessment of noise from substations, standard methods of assessment and interpretation using the principles of the relevant British Standards are satisfactory.	
Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs)	2.9.44	Power frequency EMFs arise from generation, transmission, distribution and use of electricity and will occur around power lines and electric cables and around domestic, office or industrial equipment that uses electricity.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics [EN010141/DR/6.1]** confirms that the below ground electrical lines as proposed within Work No. 4 do not present a risk in relation to electric magnetic fields. On this basis, the Scheme will comply with the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002.
	2.9.45	EMFs comprise electric and magnetic fields. Electric fields are the result of voltages applied to electrical conductors and equipment. Fences, shrubs and buildings easily block electric fields. Magnetic fields are produced by the flow of electric current; however, unlike electric fields, most materials do not readily block magnetic fields. The intensity of both electric fields and magnetic fields diminishes with increasing distance from the source.	
	2.9.46	All overhead power lines produce EMFs. These tend to be highest directly under a line and decrease to the sides at increasing distance. Although putting cables underground eliminates the electric field, they still produce magnetic fields, which are highest directly above the cable. EMFs can have both direct and indirect effects on human health, aquatic and terrestrial organisms.	
	2.10.11	The applicant should consider the following factors: • height, position, insulation and protection (electrical or mechanical as appropriate) measures subject to ensuring compliance with the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002; • that optimal phasing of high voltage overhead power lines is introduced wherever possible and practicable in accordance with the Code of Practice to minimise EMFs; and	

Policy Area	Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
		• any new advice emerging from the Department of Health and Social Care relating to government policy for EMF exposure guidelines.	
	2.10.12	Where it can be shown that the line will comply with the current public exposure guidelines and the policy on phasing, no further mitigation should be necessary.	
	2.11.13	Undergrounding of a line would reduce the level of EMFs experienced, but high magnetic field levels may still occur immediately above the cable. It is the government's policy that power lines should not be undergrounded solely for the purpose of reducing exposure to EMFs.	
Sulphur Hexafluoride	2.10.14	The climate-warming potential of SF6 is such that applicants should, as a rule, avoid the use of SF6 in new developments.	The Scheme will require 400kV circuit breakers at the East Park Energy Substation and at the National Grid Eaton Socon Substation. It is possible that these components would require SF6 in line with current standards set by Distribution Network Operators. Manufacturers are however now increasingly able to offer SF6-free components, and those that do continue to use SF6 are sealed-for-life with extremely low leakage rates. For this reason, as set out in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1: Greenhouse Gas Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**, it is assumed that emissions of SF6 from the Scheme will be minimal and not material to the assessment of greenhouse gas emissions for the Scheme. Reference is also made in both the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.11]** and outline **Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12]**
	2.10.15	Where no proven SF6-free alternative is commercially available, and where the cost of procuring a bespoke alternative is grossly disproportionate, the continued use of SF6 is acceptable, provided that emissions monitoring and control measures compliant with the F-gas Regulation and/or its successors are in place.	
	2.11.17	The Secretary of State should grant consent for an electricity networks development only if the applicant has demonstrated either: i. that the development will not use SF6; or ii. (a) that there is no proven commercially available alternative to the use of SF6; and (b) that a bespoke SF6-free alternative would be grossly disproportionate in terms of cost; and (c) that emissions monitoring and control measures compliant with the Fgas Regulation and/or its successors are in place.	

5.0 HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036

5.1.1 Table 4 sets out policy requirements from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

Table 1: Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Section 4 The Development Strategy		
Policy LP2 Strategy for Development	**Strategy for Development** The development strategy for Huntingdonshire is to: • Concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities; • Direct substantial new development to two strategic expansion locations of sufficient scale to form successful, functioning new communities; • Provide opportunities for communities to achieve local development aspirations for housing, employment, commercial or community related schemes; • Support a thriving rural economy; • Protect the character of existing settlements and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside; • Conserve and enhance the historic environment; and • Provide complementary green infrastructure enhancement and provision to balance recreational and biodiversity needs and to support climate change adaptation. **Distribution of Growth** Four spatial planning areas are designated reflecting their status as the district's traditional market towns and most sustainable centres. These are centred around: • Huntingdon including Brampton and Godmanchester and the strategic expansion location of Alconbury Weald • St Neots including Little Paxton and the strategic expansion location of St Neots East • St Ives • Ramsey including Bury. Approximately three quarters of the objectively assessed need for housing and the majority of employment and retail growth will be focused in the spatial planning areas. Seven key service centres are designated reflecting the concentration of services and facilities in these locations and their role in providing services to residents of other nearby communities. These are: • Buckden	The Policy purports to set out the development strategy for Huntingdonshire, it is clear by reference to the 'reasoning' to the policy wording that the primary intention of the development strategy is to control the development of housing and employment generating development. Thus, its purpose is not to necessarily control the type of development proposed by the Scheme. Irrespective, the policy does not explicitly preclude development beyond the main urban areas, key service centres and rural settlements, but rather requires most development to be concentrated / targeted on these areas. The approach taken to site selection is set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternative and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** along with supporting appendices, including **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2] and ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-5 Review of Site Identification Report following designation of National Policy Statement EN-3 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** The ES chapter and associated reports set out in detail the planning policy based, structured, approach the Applicant has taken to site selection, the alternatives that were considered and the detailed justification for selecting the Site and the proposed Order Limits. A detailed assessment of the scheme in the context of its impact on the countryside, the historic environment and green infrastructure provision are addressed in response to Local Plan Policies LP10, and LP3 and LP34 below.

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	• Fenstanton • Kimbolton • Sawtry • Somersham • Warboys • Yaxley. All other settlements with a single built up area of 30 dwellings or more are defined as Small Settlements as set out in 'Definition of Small Settlements'. Approximately a quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing, together with a limited amount of employment growth, will be permitted on sites dispersed across the key service centres and small settlements to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply. In addition, rural exception, small and windfall sites will be permitted on sites which are in conformity with other policies of this plan providing further flexibility in the housing supply.	
Policy LP3 Green Infrastructure	**Green Infrastructure** A proposal will be expected to support green infrastructure and will therefore be supported where it demonstrates that it: a) incorporates open/ green space in accordance with the Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011) (SPD), or successor documents; b) protects and where possible enhances existing green infrastructure, concentrating efforts on protecting, enhancing or creating links within, to and between green infrastructure priority areas and the Cambridgeshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Network; c) is consistent with the objectives of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) or successor documents; d) improves the accessibility, naturalness and connectivity of green spaces, assisting in achieving Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt); e) provides replacement provision where the proposal would result in harm to or loss of existing green infrastructure where the replacement provides a net benefit, judged in terms of the factors set out in the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011); f) maintains and where appropriate enhances the rights of way network; and g) contributes to the re-naturalisation of water bodies such as rivers and lakes, where possible. **Green Infrastructure Priority Areas** Several Green Infrastructure Priority Areas have been identified, as indicated on 'The Key Diagram' and shown on the Policies Map. They have potential to consolidate and	As noted in the policy wording, Several Green Infrastructure Priority Areas have been identified within Huntingdonshire District and the extent of each is illustrated on 'The Key Diagram' and shown on the Local Plan Policies Map. Each has been identified on the basis that it has the potential to consolidate and link important habitats and facilitate access improvements. Whilst the Order Limits do not include any of the Green Infrastructure Priority Areas the provision of green infrastructure has nevertheless been a significant consideration for the Applicant in developing the Scheme. The impacts of the Scheme on green infrastructure and the associated mitigation and compensation, is dealt with in a number of ES chapters, as follows: i. Impacts on public rights of way are considered in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1], ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1]** with mitigation set out in the **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.14]** ii. Impacts on Habitats and networks are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** which sets out how existing and proposed green infrastructure will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme. iii. watercourses and drainage networks are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1**] iv. soils resources are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** Requirements will be proposed within the **draft Development Consent Order [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the delivery of the relevant green infrastructure mitigation / enhancement measures. The outcome of the abovementioned assessment work has been factored into design and as set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** and the **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.14]**, the Scheme would result in minimal loss of existing green infrastructure (including all PRoW), whilst delivering significant gains / benefits across the Site. In doing so it is entirely in line with the relevent requirements of Policy LP3.

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	link important habitats and facilitate access improvements. A proposal within a priority area will be supported where the requirements for that area will be achieved. **The Great Fen** Within the Great Fen a proposal will only be supported where it is clearly demonstrated that it will make a positive contribution towards the implementation of the Great Fen Master Plan (2010) or successor documents. A proposal that lies outside the designated Great Fen area, but within its Landscape and Visual Setting will be expected to demonstrate consideration of the landscape and visual impacts that the proposal could have on the Great Fen, such as how the proposal might affect the aims of the Great Fen project to establish an area where the experience gained by visitors will be one of a tranquil area of countryside unaffected by urban encroachment. **Great Ouse Valley** A proposal within the Ouse Valley Landscape Character Area, defined in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document will be supported where it contributes to the landscape, wildlife, cultural and historical value of the area. A proposal at Paxton Pits will be supported where it helps to deliver the objectives of the Nature Reserve Management Plan (2017) and/ or the objectives of the Reserve Management Strategy for the planned extension to Paxton Pits Nature Reserve (2007) or successor documents. **Nene Valley** Within the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it is compatible with the objectives of the NIA and where possible enables identified habitat opportunities to be realised. **Grafham Water** A proposal within the Grafham Water Landscape Character Area, defined in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, will be supported where it enhances or creates ecological or landscape linkages between Grafham Water and woodland in the vicinity. Enhanced access will also be supported subject to compatibility with the landscape and biodiversity. A proposal will be supported where it involves the role, function and continued operation or enhancement of Grafham Water Reservoir, its Treatment Works and associated networks. **Associated facilities** A proposal to provide facilities associated with strategic green infrastructure in the countryside will be supported where a countryside location is justified, the use is compatible with the green infrastructure in question and adverse effects are avoided.	The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** that sets out how existing and proposed green infrastructure will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme.
Policy LP5 Flood Risk	**Location of Development** A proposal will only be supported where all forms of flood risk, including breaches of flood defences or other defence failures, have been addressed, as detailed in the National Planning Practice Guidance and with reference to the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), such that:	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant effects on Hydrology and Flood Risk quality as a result of the Scheme. All potential sources of flooding have been reviewed as part of the assessment including fluvial (from rivers), tidal, surface water, sewer flooding, groundwater and artificial sources. Whilst the Site has watercourses running through it, the EA's fluvial flood map shows that flood zones are limited in extent, being largely restricted to the immediate proximity of watercourses. The EA's

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	a) the sequential approach and sequential test are applied and passed, having regard to actual and residual flood risk and including consideration of the impact of climate change; b) if necessary the exception test is applied and passed; c) development has been sequentially located within the site to avoid flood risk; d) all reasonable opportunities to reduce overall flood risk have been considered and where possible taken; e) the integrity of existing flood defences is not adversely affected and any necessary flood mitigation and compensation measures have been agreed with relevant bodies and the Council; and f) the requirements relating to flood risk set out in the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD have been applied. Any reliance on emergency services to make a proposal safe will not be acceptable. Safety risks will be determined with reference to the Defra guidance on flood risk safety FD2320 or successor guidance, on the basis that development should be 'safe for all' for a 1:100 annual probability flood event, for the lifetime of the development, with appropriate climate change allowances. **Previously developed land in defended areas** Where a proposal for redevelopment of Previously Developed Land (as defined in the 'Glossary') which benefits from flood defences is deemed appropriate following application of the sequential test and exception test it will be supported where: g) breach modelling has been completed to determine the residual risk in all instances for new vulnerable development; and h) safe access and egress can be provided with approval from the emergency planning authority that there is no additional reliance on their services as a result of the development. **Managing flood water** Where a proposal is considered to be acceptable within the 1% annual probability flood extent (flood zone 3), including an allowance for climate change for the lifetime of the development, the development must not result in a loss of flood storage capacity, reduced flow performance, increase the rate of flooding onset or result in an unsustainable form of flood storage requiring on-going silt removal, maintenance or renewal. Where a proposal would occupy functional flood plain (flood zone 3b), the developer must ensure that it does not impact upon the ability of the floodplain to store or convey water, and seek opportunities to provide floodplain betterment. Development will only be support where it results in no loss of floodplain performance within the undefended floodplain. Where ground levels are proposed to be raised to bring the development out of the floodplain compensatory floodplain storage within areas that currently lie outside the floodplain must be provided to ensure that the total volume and performance of floodplain storage is not reduced or vulnerability to climate change impacts increased. **Site-specific flood risk assessments**	pluvial flood map also indicates that there are also localised areas of surface water flooding the Site, the most significant of which are associated with and close to watercourses. The Applicant has undertaken a Sequential Test assessment in connection with the Scheme the results of which are reported within Section 4.0 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The main application of the Sequential Test was undertaken during the site selection exercise which is set out within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2].** In assessing suitable sites, the Applicant considered a series of factors (including flood risk) that, to a greater or lesser extent, are important in determining whether alternative sites exist that represent '*reasonably available'* alternatives. The conclusion is that when taking into account wider sustainable objectives there are compelling reasons that there are no other sites reasonably available within the search area that are at a lower flood risk than the Site. Accordingly, **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2** concludes that the Sequential Test has been satisfied for the Scheme. Following the application of the sequential test in site selection the Applicant then applied the sequential approach when developing the Scheme layout and deciding upon the siting of infrastructure, this approach is also summarised in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. For fluvial flood risk, this has ensured that all critical infrastructure is located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 and that no electrical infrastructure would be placed within a 10m buffer of any watercourses, irrespective of whether there is a medium or high risk of flooding. Consequently, only a very small amount of the Scheme elements would be within areas of floor risk and only where it is essential, such as bridge crossings of watercourses. In terms of pluvial flooding Paragraph 027 of the PPG for Flood Risk and Coastal Change states that a proportionate approach should be taken to the application of the sequential test, and that where a FRA demonstrates that a development would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (without increasing flood risk elsewhere), then the sequential test does not need to be applied. It will be necessary for a small number of panels to be located in the pluvial flood extents shown on EA mapping Where PV panels are to be located in pluvial flood extents, they will be installed such that the underside of the panels will be above the maximum predicted flood levels , with only supporting legs of the mounting tables within the flood extent. The supporting legs have a small cross-sectional area and would have a negligible impact on pluvial flood risk. On this basis, and in accordance with the PPG, the sequential test need not be applied in relation surface water flood risk. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.concludes that a sequential approach to the placement of infrastructure has been adopted throughout the development process in reference to the assessed flood risk data. Where it has been necessary for parts of the Scheme to be sited in fluvial or surface water flood risk zones, it has been clearly demonstrated why it is either not impacted by flood risk or how it has been mitigated. The Applicant has also presented evidence on the Exception Test within Section 4.0 **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. As all critical infrastructure has been sited in areas at the lowest risk of flooding (i.e., within Flood Zone 1) and the Scheme would remain operational and safe in times of flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere the Scheme is considered to have passed the requirements of the Exception Test. Finally, to ensure that the development doesn't increase offsite flood risk, the design will incorporate a SuDS scheme to manage surface water runoff, this is detailed in the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]**. The oSWMP will ensure a neutral or beneficial effect on on-site and third-party surface water flood risks.

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	On a site that is at risk of flooding from any form, where there are critical drainage problems or on sites of 1 hectare or more the proposal will only be supported where a site-specific flood risk assessment has been produced, appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and risks involved, including consideration of the impact of climate change, and is agreed with relevant bodies. Such assessments will need to demonstrate that they comply with the requirements set out: i) in the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD or successor documents; j) by any applicable responsible authority, including but not limited to the Environment Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority; and k) by the Middle Level Commissioners or internal drainage boards, as may be applicable.	
LP10 Countryside	**The Countryside** Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan. All development in the countryside must: a) seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value: i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land; b) recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and c) not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.	The Scheme has followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts on land of a higher agricultural value where possible, beginning with the site selection stage reported in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2**]. The site identification exercise firstly considered brownfield / previously developed land within a 15km search radius of the point of connection at the Eaton Socon Substation. This land was not availiable, and the assessment ultimately concluded that that there was no Search Zone around the point of connection that was not constrained in some way, and that only by taking a balanced consideration of technical and environmental factors was it possible to select a search zone for the Site. The key determining factor in recommending the final Search Zone for the Site was that it was likely to have the most straightforward grid connection, which in turn would avoid and reduce environmental impacts, affect less landowners, and ensure that the Scheme remains commercially viable. In terms of agricultural land classification, it was established that the Site would be likely to include some areas of BMV land, but that with the evidence available it was unlikely to contain significantly greater or lesser extents of BMV land than any other area within 15km of the point of connection. NPS EN-3 is clear however (Paragraph 2.10.29) that '*land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location*'. The above measures set out the steps taken to avoid development of BMV land as far as practicable, being the first step in the mitigation hierarchy. To reduce and minimise impacts to soils, the mounting structures for the solar arrays utilise ram-driven posts for the arrays which do not require excavation, minimising soil disturbance and enabling reinstatement at decommissioning. The Applicant has prepared an **outline Soil Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.9]** that sets out how soils will be managed throughout the lifetime of the Scheme to minimise adverse impacts, including by committing to best practice guidance for soil handling. Mitigation measures are also set out within Section 13.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The ALC distribution across the Site is reported in Table 13.8 of **ES Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1],** it confirms: • Grade 2 - 164.0 ha (21.2%); • Grade 3a - 349.5 ha (45.2%); and • Grade 3b - 182.4 ha (23.6%).

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		There are also small areas of the Site classed as ungraded and non-agricultural, with ungraded land treated as Grade 2 for environmental assessment purposes. In total, and as set out in **ES Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the Scheme would only result in permanent adverse impact to approximately 5.76 hectares of best and most versatile land. The remainder of the best and most versatile (Grade 2 and Grade 3a) land within the Site would not be permanently adversely impacted by the Scheme and could be easily reverted to its existing agricultural condition upon completion, with anticipated benefits in relation to soil structure and resources. The need for and benefits of the Scheme are well established in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, and it is considered that the substantial positive weight that should be afforded to the Scheme clearly outweighs the limited negative weight that should be given to the harm to agricultural land and soils. This is consistent with recent SoS decisions on other solar NSIPs that have resulted in the temporary and permanent loss of BMV land. Regarding the character and beauty of the countryside, the Applicant has prepared a LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition*. The LVIA has considered effects upon the landscape fabric of the Order Limits, upon the landscape character of the Study Area, and upon views. Effects have been assessed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. The LVIA concludes that there would be residual Significant adverse effects for users of the existing public right of way network through the Site. As set out in the LVIA, mitigation has been identified to reduce these effects as far as possible and for many of the public rights of way, the effects would be reduced to 'Not Significant' after 10 years, following establishment of mitigation planting. Visual effects experienced by local residents in their properties would also be Significant adverse in a number of cases upon first development of the Scheme. The LVIA concludes that following establishment of mitigation planting all residential receptors would experience a reduction in the level of effect such that the residual effect after 10 years is assessed as 'Not Significant'. No significant visual effects have been identified on users of community facilities, people using roads and people at employment sites. Measures that have been embedded into the design of the Scheme to minimise and reduce effects are set out in Section 6.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. It is also important to note that, as set out **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the Proposed Development is temporary and upon the completion of the decommissioning of the Proposed Development the long-term effects of the Operational Phase on visual receptors would be removed. Finally, the weight that has been given to any landscape or visual harm has been addressed in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** which sets out the overall planning balance for the Scheme. The assessment concludes that the benefits of the development including the overriding need and other benefits that would be derived from the Scheme would outweigh any disbenefits including any landscape and visual effects. In terms of amenity related impacts the Applicant has prepared a **Statutory Nuisance Statement *[EN010141/DR/7.19]*** which sets out the potential sources of nuisance as defined under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Scheme would not result in significant emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light during the operational phase. There is the potential for air quality impacts as a result of dust during the construction and decommissioning phases, and therefore the Applicant has prepared **ES Vol 2**

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		Appendix 11-3: Construction Dust Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2] which confirms that, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures, the Scheme will have no significant adverse effect t or other unacceptable impact on any sensitive receptors. Measures to prevent dust during the decommissioning phase are outlined in the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** Control of artificial light and other emissions during the construction and decommissioning phases would be mitigated through the implementation of the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** An assessment of noise and vibration impacts of the Scheme is provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 10 : Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. This concludes that the Scheme would not give rise to significant adverse effects because of noise and vibration during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases.
Section 5 Requiring Good Design		
Policy LP11 Design Context	**Design Context** A proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including natural, historic and built environment, to help create distinctive, high quality and well-designed places. In order to achieve this a proposal will need to have applied the guidance contained in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017), the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007) or successor documents and applicable conservation area character statements. A proposal should also have had regard to relevant advice or guidance that promotes high quality design, details the quality or character of the area or describes how the area should develop in the future.	The Applicant has prepared a **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** which sets out the design process that has been followed from inception of the project to submission of the DCO, and how the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Good Design has been followed. It explains: • how the design vision and design principles have guided the design process, • how the design of the Scheme has evolved through each stage of the pre-application development process, • how consultation feedback at each stage has guided design changes, and • how the outcomes of environmental surveys and assessment have been integrated with the process. Section 6.0 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out how good design would be secured as part of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the established design principles will be integrated within the final design post consent. The Design Principles (set out within Section 3.0 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**) have been used to fundamentally guide and shape the approach to the design of the Scheme.
Policy LP12 Design Implementation	**Design Implementation** New development and advertisements will be expected to be well designed based upon a thorough understanding of constraints and appraisal of the site's context, delivering attractive, usable and long lasting buildings and spaces. A proposal will be supported, therefore, where it can be demonstrated that it: **Response to Context** a) contributes positively to the area's character and identity; b) successfully integrates with adjoining, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography and landscape; **Streets and spaces shaped by buildings** c) creates attractive and appropriately scaled built frontages to positively enhance the townscape, avoiding the introduction of incongruous and/or intrusive elements into key views and vistas; d) delivers a balanced mix of compatible buildings and uses, promoting variety, choice and economic activity;	

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	e) enables the wider area to achieve a coherent and integrated built form including considering potential future development or redevelopment of adjoining sites; **Ease of getting around** f) promotes accessibility and permeability for all by creating safe and welcoming places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport; g) provides recognisable and understandable places, routes and points of reference; **Well designed public spaces** h) promotes a sense of place to include attractive streets, squares and other public spaces with a defined sense of enclosure, with multi-functional green spaces and corridors; i) creates development that will function well and is safe and secure to use; **Sustainable Design and Construction Methods** j) makes efficient use of energy, water and other resources, such that all new homes comply with the optional building regulation for water efficiency, as set out in Approved Document G and non-residential uses meet Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standards (or successor or equivalent standards) 'Good' as a minimum; k) secures a distinctive environment for the development through high quality hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments; l) ensures that public and private amenity spaces are clearly defined and are designed to be inclusive, usable, safe and enjoyable; m) successfully integrates the functional needs of the development including refuse and recycling, cycle storage and car parking so that their dominance is minimised; n) implements a cohesive design through the use of a limited palette of quality, durable materials with an attention to detail particularly where different elements and materials meet; and o) does not impede pedestrian and vehicular movements or impact on public safety.	
Policy LP13 Placemaking	A proposal for large scale development, defined in the 'Glossary', will be expected to be supported by a master planning process proportionate to the scale and complexity of the site and development proposed. Such processes should include identification of options and objective reasoning for arriving at the selected approach. Outputs from the process should include a strategy for how good design is to be achieved, including the general layout, mix and scale of all uses proposed as part of the development and the design principles that will need to be applied. The master planning process for a large scale major development, defined in the 'Glossary', will be expected to include production of a design code. A design code will also be required where it is known from the outset that the site will be developed in more than one phase or by more than one developer.	

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	Where a proposal is to be accompanied by a master plan or design code the applicant should be prepared to engage positively with independent design review at an early stage if requested to do so by the Council. Applicants will be expected to implement recommendations from the process.	
Policy LP14 Amenity	A proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings. A proposal will therefore be required to ensure: a) adequate availability of daylight and sunlight for the proposed use, minimising the effects of overshadowing and the need for artificial light; b) the physical relationships arising from the design and separation of buildings are not oppressive or overbearing, and in particular will not result in overlooking causing loss of privacy; c) that predicted adverse noise impacts, including internal and external levels, timing, duration and character, will be acceptable; d) that predicted adverse impacts from the following sources will be made acceptable: i. obtrusive light; ii. contamination; iii. air pollution; iv. water pollution; v. odour; vi. dust; and vii. overheating e) adequate and accessible waste storage is provided, avoiding adverse impacts; f) the risk and perceived risk of crime is minimised, including through applying relevant guidance from Secured by Design; g) that all homes, businesses and main town centre uses are capable of being served by super-fast broadband through the integration of appropriate measures such as open access ducting to industry standards; and h) that there would be no adverse effect on safety near a notifiable installation and no increase in the number of people that would be put at risk in the vicinity of a notifiable installation.	The Applicant has prepared a **Statutory Nuisance Statement [EN010141/DR/7.19]** which sets out the potential sources of nuisance as defined under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Scheme would not result in significant emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light during the operational phase. However, there is the potential for air quality impacts as a result of dust during the construction and decommissioning phases, and therefore the Applicant has prepared **ES Vol 2 Appendix 11-3: Construction Dust Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** which confirms that, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures, the Scheme will have no significant adverse effect t or other unacceptable impact on any sensitive receptors. Measures to prevent dust during the decommissioning phase are outlined in the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** Control of artificial light and other emissions during the construction and decommissioning phases would be mitigated through the implementation of the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** An assessment of noise and vibration impacts of the Scheme is provided in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 10 : Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. This concludes that the Scheme would not give rise to significant adverse effects because of noise and vibration during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. From a water pollution perspective as set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** embedded SuDS design to replicate natural drainage pathways and provide appropriate level of treatment of runoff at source before entering watercourses. Implementation via the CEMP and SWMP. There are no inherent safety issues associated with the Scheme. However, measures at ensuring public safety including fencing CCTV and safety associated with the proposed BESS are included within the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3], outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5], outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** and **outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.10]**
Policy LP15 Surface Water	**Surface Water** A proposal will only be supported where surface water has been considered from the outset as an integral part of the design process and: a) the proposal incorporates sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in accordance with the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) or successor documents and advice from	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.19]** set out the measures that would be adopted to manage surface water flood risk and drainage of the Scheme. The Scheme would be drained using sustainable drainage techniques that have been designed with regard to climate change allowances. The proposed drainage would ensure that surface water run-off from the Scheme does not exceed the existing run-off rates prior to the proposed project being constructed.

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	Cambridgeshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate; b) provisions are put in place to ensure that SuDS will be maintained; c) if the drainage system would directly or indirectly involve discharge to a watercourse that the Environment Agency are responsible for the details of the discharge have been agreed with them; d) if a road would be affected by the drainage system the details have been agreed with the relevant highway authority; e) if the drainage system would discharge water to systems controlled by the Middle Level Commissioners or an internal drainage board their standing advice or guidance has been taken into account and the details of the discharge have been agreed with them; f) if the drainage system would directly or indirectly involve discharge to the River Great Ouse the incorporation of water retaining features as part of the drainage system has been prioritised; and g) there is no adverse impact on, or unacceptable risk to, the quantity or quality of water resources or on meeting the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive. SuDS for hard-standing areas for parking of 50 or more cars, or equivalent areas will be expected to include appropriate additional treatment stages/ interceptors to ensure that any pollution risks are suitably addressed. In order to safeguard against the pollution of ground water the use of deep infiltration SuDS, such as deep borehole soakaways, will not be accepted in most circumstances. Exemptions will only be made in exceptional circumstances if the proposal is for land uses that pose a very low pollution risk and are supported by an adequate risk assessment, conceptual site model and detailed design.	The proposed drainage would be delivered within the Order limits and would not require the need of planning obligations. No ground modification is proposed, and the existing runoff / overland flow regime will not change. A Water Framework Directive Assessment is provided at **ES Vol 2 Chapter 8-2: Water Framework Directive Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The assessment in combination with **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** conclude that the Scheme is WFD compliant. As such, the scheme would have no significant adverse impact on, or unacceptable risk to, the quantity or quality of water resources, or on meeting the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive.
Policy LP16 Sustainable Travel	**Sustainable Travel** New development will be expected to contribute to an enhanced transport network that supports an increasing proportion of journeys being undertaken by sustainable travel modes, defined in the 'Glossary'. A proposal will therefore be supported where it is demonstrated that: a) opportunities are maximised for the use of sustainable travel modes; b) its likely transport impacts have been assessed, and appropriate mitigation measures will be delivered, in accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance; c) safe physical access from the public highway can be achieved, including the rights of way network where appropriate d) any potential impacts on the strategic road network have been addressed in line with Department for Transport Circular 02/2013 and advice from early engagement with Highways England; and e) there are no severe residual cumulative impacts. Where a proposal would affect an existing public right of way or other formal non-motorised users' route, this route should be protected or enhanced within the proposed development. Where this is not possible it should be diverted to a safe,	Given the Site's rural location, it is acknowledged that there are limitations on staff travelling to the Order limits by walking, cycling and public transport. This is more of a consideration in the construction phase of the Scheme which will generate the largest amount of staff travel. On site staff requirements in the operational phase of the Scheme are very limited (see **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/APP/6.2])** Section 4.5 of the **oCTMP [EN010141/DR/7.4]** outlines the measures proposed to mitigate the transport impacts of construction staff travel regarding sustainable travel considerations. Full details of the measures to encourage sustainable travel will be set out within a Construction Staff Travel Plan, which would form part of the final CTMP. A requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** would ensure these measures are developed in detail and complied with. Section 9.10 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 9: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1]** identifies that the residual impact of the Scheme including the residual cumulative effect of the Scheme would not be severe and that the Transport related Environmental effects of the Scheme would not be significant in EIA terms.

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	clear and convenient alternative route. The stopping up of paths/ routes will only be acceptable where all opportunities to provide a safe, clear and convenient alternative have been investigated and proved to be unsuitable. All routes will be provided to an adoptable standard and all pedestrian and cycle routes will be formalised as rights of way unless otherwise agreed with the Council and the Highways Authority.	
Policy LP17 Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement	**Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement** A proposal will be supported where it incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates accessibility for service and emergency vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles. These should all comply with design and security guidance set out in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017) or successor documents. A clear justification for the space for vehicle movements and level of vehicle and cycle parking proposed will need to be provided taking account of: a) highway safety and access to and from the site; b) servicing requirements; c) the accessibility of the development to a wide range of services and facilities by public transport, cycling and walking; d) the needs of potential occupiers, users and visitors, now and in the future; e) the amenity of existing and future occupiers and users of the development and nearby property; and f) opportunities for shared provision, where locations and patterns of use allow this. Minimum levels of car parking for disabled people as set out in national guidance will be required. A proposal that includes residential development will be expected to provide at least one clearly identified secure cycle space per bedroom for all dwellings (C3 Use Class), unless it can be demonstrated that this is unachievable. A proposal that includes new main town centre uses of 600m2 or more net internal floorspace will be expected to provide and identify the location of at least one cycle space for every 25m2 of net internal floorspace or part thereof, or otherwise demonstrate why a different level of provision is appropriate. A proposal for a new non-residential building over 2,500m2 of net internal floorspace should provide dedicated changing and showering facilities for cyclists.	As set out in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** there would be limited traffic generation during the operational phase**.** Adequate parking provision for operational staff and contractors would be provided in the operations and maintenance area. Section 4.4 of the **oCTMP [EN010141/DR/7.4]** outlines the proposed arrangements for visitor and contractor parking. Section 4.7 of the **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** demonstrates that the Site can be safely and satisfactorily accessed by all vehicles, including service and emergency vehicles.
Section 7 Strengthening Communities		
Policy LP29 Health Impact Assessment	**Health Impact Assessment** A proposal for large scale development, defined in the 'Glossary', will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the design of the scheme has been informed by the conclusions of a rapid Health Impact Assessment.	An assessment of the human health impacts of the Scheme is addressed in Section 16.2 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The Chapter concludes that there would be very limited adverse effects of the Scheme on human health and none that would be significant in EIA terms.

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	A proposal for large scale major development, defined in the 'Glossary', will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the design of the scheme has been informed by the conclusions of a full Health Impact Assessment.	The **outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.10]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** consider the potential hazards associated with the BESS and describe the mitigation measures that have been embedded into the design of the Scheme to ensure that the associated risks are acceptable. This takes into consideration the standing advice that has been given by the fire authorities during pre-application consultation. The measures contained within the **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.10]**, **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.14], outline Soil Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.15], outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.16**], **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]; outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]; outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6];** and **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** to avoid and reduce risks relating to human health (e.g. the Protection to the Public measures at Section 4 of the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan[EN010141/DR/7.5]**) would be secured as full Management Plans within the DCO and associated Requirements.
Section 8 Conserving and Enhancing the Environment		
Policy LP30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity	**Biodiversity and Geodiversity** A proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. Any further research that is identified as necessary by this appraisal will need to have been carried out and submitted with the proposal. Where a proposal has potential to affect an internationally important site an 'appropriate assessment' in accordance with the Habitats Directive will be required and sufficient information to enable such an assessment to be completed must be submitted with the proposal. All possible efforts must be taken to avoid adverse impacts. If it is demonstrated that adverse impacts are unavoidable they must be minimised as far as possible and then mitigated. Only where this process of avoidance, minimisation and then mitigation is insufficient to fully address adverse impacts will consideration be given to compensation measures. Following this process a proposal will only be supported subject to a hierarchy where: a) a site of international importance, being a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar site would be affected there has to be exceptional overriding reasons of human health, public safety or environmental benefit; b) a site of national importance, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or National Nature Reserve (NNR) would be affected there has to be exceptional circumstances where the need for, and the benefits of, the proposal significantly outweigh both the potential impacts on the features of the site that make it of national importance and any broader impacts on the national network of such sites; c) a protected species, a priority habitat or species, a site of local or regional importance, the achievement of water body good ecological potential, or the	The Applicant has prepared an assessment of impacts to ecological and nature conservation receptors within **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely impacts and effects of the Scheme on ecological receptors. Section 7.7 of the chapter sets out the mitigation measures that are embedded into the Scheme to avoid or reduce the adverse effects. The assessment of likely impacts and effects is specifically contained within Section 7.8 and the residual effects are reported within Section 7.10. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that during the construction phase the Scheme would result in short term and temporary minor adverse effects on ground nesting birds, the wider breeding bird assemblage, amphibians (including great crested newt) and otter. These effects would not be significant in EIA terms. During the operational phase the Scheme will result in a significant beneficial effect on priority habitats and on foraging and commuting bats. It would also result in beneficial (not significant) effects for other ecological receptors. As noted previously the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy. Further discussion on this matter is presented in Section 7 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.

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	biodiversity value of the proposed development site as part of the wider network would be affected, the need for and the benefits of the proposal must clearly outweigh the assessed impacts. A proposal will not be supported if potential impacts would lead to the deterioration of water body ecological status/ potential. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type and location of development. Large scale development proposals should provide an audit of losses and gains in biodiversity produced according to a recognised methodology. In seeking to provide net gains for biodiversity reference should be had to the Natural Cambridgeshire publication 'Developing with Nature Toolkit' and the proposal should prioritise measures that: d) complement or enhance existing features of biodiversity value within the design and layout of development; e) provide new biodiversity features within the development; f) help reverse the decline of species; g) assist in achieving local targets for priority habitats and species including those set out in Habitat Action Plans; h) improve public access to nature; i) ensure the effective management of biodiversity or geological features; j) contribute to the provision of multi-functional green infrastructure to enhance ecological networks and the Green Infrastructure Priority Areas k) contribute towards the achievement of good ecological status in water bodies (or not compromise achievement of good ecological potential) in accordance with the Anglian River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and accompanying catchment action plans; or l) will help species adapt to climate change.	
Policy LP31 Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows	Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows A proposal will be required to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated. Where investigations show that such adverse impacts are possible a statement will be required that: assesses all trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows that would be affected by the proposal, describing and assessing their value; sets out how the details of the proposal have been decided upon in terms of their impact on the value of trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows and how adverse impacts will be avoided as far as possible, or if unavoidable how they will be minimised as far as possible. A proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development. In such cases the proposal will be expected to make reference to and follow the guidance contained in the Council's A Tree Strategy for Huntingdonshire (2015) or successor documents.	The Applicant has undertaken an Arboricultural Assessment **ES Vol 2 Appendix 2-2: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** of the existing trees and woodlands within the Site. This confirms that the construction of the Scheme would only necessitate the loss of two trees. It also confirms that a further 12 trees have been identified which are in very poor condition and merit removal. The survey has not identified any ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats within the order limits. Hedgerow habitats would also be almost entirely retained as part of the Scheme and protected with buffer zones of at least 6m. The only exception would be small-scale removal / widening required to permit Site access at ten locations, totalling 54m with no individual length of removal greater than 6m. Post-construction seven of the crossing points, totalling 37m, would be reinstated. Mitigation measures to avoid and minimise adverse effects to trees, woodland and hedgerow are set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]. Similarly, an outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively.

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	Loss, threat or damage to any tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of visual, heritage or nature conservation value will only be acceptable where: it is addressed firstly by seeking to avoid the impact, then to minimise the impact and finally where appropriate to include mitigation measures; or there are sound arboricultural reasons to support the proposal. Where impacts remain the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location must clearly outweigh the loss, threat or damage. Where loss, threat or damage cannot be fully addressed through minimisation and/ or mitigation measures the proposal may be supported if alternative measures such as reinstatement of features, additional landscaping, habitat creation or tree planting will compensate for the harm and can be implemented and established before development starts. A proposal for major scale development will be required to include additional new trees to form part of landscaping for the proposal, the form of which will be determined by negotiation.	The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** that sets out how existing and proposed trees, woodland and hedgerows will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme. Set against the very small loss of trees and hedgerow is the extensive landscape and biodiversity enhancement proposals that are proposed in connection with the Scheme. These proposals are set out in the outline **Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13] and ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**. The illustrative landscape proposals shown **on ES Volume 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3**] include the planting of over 17km of native species hedgerow 19 ha of woodland and 375 individual trees.
Policy LP34 Heritage Assets and their Settings	**Heritage Assets and their Settings** Great weight and importance is given to the conservation of heritage assets (see 'Glossary') and their settings. The statutory presumption of the avoidance of harm can only be outweighed if there are public benefits that are powerful enough to do so. A proposal will be required to demonstrate the potential for adverse impacts on the historic environment. Where investigations show that impacts on heritage assets or their settings, whether designated or not, are possible a heritage statement will be required, in a manner proportionate to the asset's significance, that: assesses all heritage assets and their settings that would be affected by the proposal, describing and assessing the significance of each asset and its setting to determine its architectural, historical or archaeological interest; sets out how the details of the proposal have been decided upon such that all adverse impacts are avoided as far as possible, or if unavoidable how they will be minimised as far as possible; details how, following avoidance and minimisation, the proposal would impact on the significance and special character of each asset; provides clear justification for the proposal, especially if it would harm the significance of an asset or its setting, so that the harm can be weighed against public benefits; and identifies ways in which the proposal could make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, affected heritage assets and their settings. **Conversion, Alteration or Other Works to a Heritage Asset** Additionally, where a proposal is for conversion, alteration, other works to a heritage asset or within its setting it must be demonstrated that the proposal: protects the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings by protecting and enhancing architectural and historic character, historical associations, landscape and townscape features and through consideration of scale, design, materials, siting, layout, mass, use, and views both from and towards the asset;	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the Scheme on heritage assets, their settings and buried archaeology. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-1: Gazetteer of Heritage Assets and Events [EN010141/DR/6.2]** provides a description of all heritage assets identified within the Study Areas, The identified and potential non-designated heritage assets which may be subject to direct and indirect impacts are presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. Descriptions of all heritage assets identified within the study areas are included within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-1 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** with further discussion of the identified heritage baseline (formed by these assets) presented in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2 [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.presents the methodology and approach to for establishing the relative sensitivity of a Heritage Asset to changes to its setting. The assessment of potential setting effects includes descriptions of the significance of the settings of the heritage assets as is presented in Table 1 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and in Section 6.8 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** An **outline Heritage Enhancement Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.16]** has also been produced which contains recommended measures for making a positive contribution to the historic environment. These measures are also presented in Paragraphs 6.7.33 to 6.7.36 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment of potential settings effects has identified temporary significant effects upon the settings of the Old Manor House, Cretingsbury: a motte castle and moated manor house Scheduled Monument (Asset 4) to the east of Little Staughton, the Grade I Listed Church of All Saints (Asset 38), to the east of Little Staughton, the Roman small town south of Great Staughton Scheduled Monument (Asset 991) within the northern part of Site C and the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western part of Site D during the construction phase. Due to the implementation of further mitigation, the identified temporary effects upon the setting of designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site during the construction phase would not continue beyond the completion of the construction phase.

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	does not harm or detract from the significance of the heritage asset, its setting and any special features that contribute to its special architectural or historic interest and the proposal conserves and enhances its special character and qualities; respects the historic form, fabric and special interest that contributes to the significance of the affected heritage asset; will conserve or enhance the quality, distinctiveness and character of the affected heritage asset; and contributes to securing the long-term maintenance and management of the heritage asset. The Council will consider the significance of a designated heritage asset and where there is less than substantial harm, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Where there is deemed to be substantial harm, then the proposal would need to achieve substantial public benefits to outweigh that harm. Where a non-designated heritage asset would be affected a balanced judgement will be reached having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the heritage asset. **Conservation Areas** A proposal within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a conservation area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements or other applicable documents. A proposal should: minimise negative impact on the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape through retention of buildings/ groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and land form; retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, scale, massing, form, materials and plot widths of the existing built environment; as well as retaining architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area; and where relevant and practical, remove features that are incompatible with or detract significantly from the conservation area. **Archaeology** If initial site assessment does not provide sufficient information to enable consideration of the impact of the proposal on the significance of archaeological remains, developers will be required to undertake fieldwork evaluation of a site in advance of determination of the application. Where possible and appropriate the preservation of archaeological remains in-situ should be ensured. Where this is either not possible or not desirable, as agreed with the Council, provision must be made for comprehensive recording, analysis of the results and publication. There will also be a requirement for preservation and where practical enhancement.	The assessment has established that during the operational phase of the Scheme would have a significant residual effect (in EIA terms) upon the setting of a single heritage asset, which is upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D. As the overall significance of this asset will remain intact and appreciable following development of the Scheme, the level of harm is considered to be 'less than substantial'. The policy test in NPS EN-1 specifies that this 'less than substantial' harm this 'should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Scheme is CNP infrastructure that would deliver substantial public benefits. This is supported by paragraph 4.2.16 of NPS EN-1 which confirms that CNP infrastructure should be treated as meeting any test which requires a clear outweighing of harm. No other significant effects have been identified upon the settings of any of the other heritage assets. In terms of buried remains, it will be possible to mitigate or offset any potential direct impacts on significant archaeological remains through design (avoidance), utilisation of 'no dig solutions (reducing the level of impact) or through programmes of archaeological monitoring, excavation and recording which would allow any remains to be 'preserved by record'. Therefore, direct effects would either be avoided, minimised or off-set.
Policy LP35 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	**Renewable and Low carbon Energy** A proposal for a renewable or low carbon energy generating scheme, other than wind energy, will be supported where it is demonstrated that all potential adverse impacts including cumulative impacts are or can be made acceptable.	The Proposed Development is a new solar electricity generating station that would contribute to the delivery of a cleaner and more secure electricity network. The Applicant has undertaken an EIA for the Proposed Development which is reported in the **ES [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]**.

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	A proposal for wind energy development will only be supported where: a) it lies within the area identified as suitable for wind energy development, being the whole of the district with the exception of the Great Fen and its Landscape and Visual Setting, or within an area defined in an adopted neighbourhood plan; and b) following consultation, as set out in the Wind Turbine Development guidance note, the Council is satisfied that all potential adverse planning impacts, including cumulative impacts and those identified by affected local communities, have been fully addressed. When identifying and considering the acceptability of potential adverse planning impacts their significance and level of harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. When identifying and considering impacts on heritage assets and/ or their settings special regard will be had to the desirability of protecting and enhancing the significance of such assets. When identifying and considering landscape and visual impacts regard will be had to the Wind Energy in Development in Huntingdonshire SPD (2014) and the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007) or successor documents. Having identified potential adverse impacts, the proposal must seek to address them all firstly by seeking to avoid the impact, then to minimise the impact. The acceptability of impacts on the significance of heritage assets will be considered at this point. For all other impacts alternative enhancement and/ or compensatory measures should be assessed and included in order to make the impact acceptable. All reasonable efforts to avoid, minimise and, where appropriate, compensate will be essential for significant adverse impacts to be considered fully addressed. Sufficient evidence will need to have been provided to demonstrate that adverse impacts on designated nature conservation sites can be adequately mitigated. Where relevant this will include sufficient information to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment. A proposal for an extension of time to the permitted period for time limited planning permissions for a renewable or low carbon energy generation installation will be required to demonstrate that the measures to address adverse planning impacts remain effective and adhere to prevailing standards. Provision will be made for the removal of apparatus and reinstatement of the site to an acceptable condition, should the scheme become redundant or at the end of the permitted period for time limited planning permissions.	Likely significant adverse environmental effects have been identified during the construction phase at a localised level in and around the Site in relation to, a limited number of heritage assets, the landscape in the immediate vicinity of the Site, and users of PRoW within the Site. Likely significant adverse environmental effects would continue in the Operational Phase for a single heritage asset, the local landscape and users of PRoWs within the Site. However, there would also be significant beneficial environmental effects in relation to ecology and biodiversity, and a reduction in atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions. The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** sets out the benefits of the project, and that as the Proposed Development is CNP infrastructure, together with the other significant benefits of the Scheme, the benefits outweigh any identified harm. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides a description of the Decommissioning Phase and confirms that that almost all the Site would be returned to a condition suitable for return to its original use after decommissioning. An **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** has also been prepared. Finaly, it should also be noted that the Applicant has also engaged with Natural England with regards Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) matters, which is set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]** and in the **Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment [EN010141/DR/5.7]**. The latter concludes no likely effects on European sites and therefore no appropriate assessment is required.
Policy LP36 Air Quality	**Air Quality** A proposal will need to be accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment where: a) it is for large scale major development, defined in the 'Glossary'; b) it would potentially conflict with an Air Quality Action Plan; c) any part of the site is located within 50m of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) or a Clean Air Zone (CAZ); d) a significant proportion of the traffic generated would go through an AQMA or a CAZ; or	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Air Quality [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the operational air quality effects of the Scheme (including traffic emissions) were scoped out of the assessment on the basis that they would be so small as to not require assessment. However, the assessment does address the construction and decommissioning phase effects including dust, on-road vehicle exhaust emissions and emissions from non-road mobile machinery. The chapter concludes that through the implementation mitigation measures (included within the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3**], there would be no significant effects in terms on-road vehicle exhaust emissions and emissions from non-road mobile machinery.

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	e) any part of the site is located within 100m of a monitoring site where the annual mean level of nitrogen dioxide exceeds 35µg/m3. An Air Quality Assessment should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal and the level of concern about air quality, but should assess: f) the existing state of air quality surrounding the site; g) how the proposal could affect air quality during construction and operational phases; h) the extent to which people could be exposed to poor air quality; and i) how biodiversity could be affected by changes in air quality as a result of the proposal. A proposal will need to be accompanied by a low emissions strategy where the air quality assessment shows that the proposal would: j) have a significant adverse effect on air quality; k) have an adverse effect on the air quality factors that led to the affected AQMA being designated; l) cause a significant increase in the number of people that would be exposed to poor air quality; or m) lead to a designated nature conservation site or protected species that is sensitive to poor air quality being adversely affected by changes in air quality. The low emissions strategy will include measures that mitigate the impacts of the proposed development by contributing to the improvement of air quality and/ or the reduction of emissions relating to the designation of the affected AQMA/ CAZ, prioritising actions identified in relevant Air Quality Action Plans/ CAZ action plans or equivalent documents. In other circumstances, where identified as necessary based on a transport assessment/ statement, measures to reduce air pollution arising from traffic and traffic congestion may also be required.	
LP37 Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution	**Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution** Where ground contamination of a site and/ or adjacent land is possible, due to factors including but not limited to existing or previous uses, the risks of ground contamination, including ground water and ground gases, will need to be investigated. Where investigation shows that development could result in an unacceptable risk or a controlled waters receptor (principal or secondary aquifer) exists a risk assessment will be required. If the risk assessment shows that the risk is acceptable the proposal will be supported, subject to appropriate arrangements being put in place to ensure that work stops if unexpected contamination comes to light. If the risk assessment shows that risks will not be acceptable, then a more detailed investigation or remediation scheme will be required. Only where the more detailed investigation or remediation scheme shows that the risks can be made acceptable will the proposal be supported, subject to appropriate arrangements being put in place to ensure that work stops if unexpected contamination comes to light.	The Applicant has undertaken an assessment of the existing ground conditions, which is provided as **ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 10-1: Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The Stage 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment has involved a walkover of the Site, comprehensive review of historic mapping, review of any historic site investigations (noting there are none). It also includes a review of information relating to potential unexploded ordnance (UXO); environmental information from BBC, HDC and CCC, the EA and other publicly available records. There is sufficient Site information available to characterise the risks presented in conjunction with the Scheme and define the mitigation measures that would be required that is proportionate to the contamination presented. Whilst some potential contamination sources have been identified on Site, they are not significant and are limited to the infilling of former ponds, historic gravel pits or where existing buildings / agricultural activities are being carried out. The required mitigation measures to be employed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases are set out in **outline Soil Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.9]***, as well as the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline**

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	Where remediation is necessary a strategy or scheme for its implementation and, where appropriate, maintenance will need to be agreed, which demonstrates that: a) the site is safe for development; b) there would be no adverse health impacts to future/ surrounding occupiers; and c) there will be no deterioration of, or minimal impact on, the environment as a result of contamination. Upon completion of the agreed remediation strategy/scheme a Verification Report will need to be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the scheme. **Protection of Groundwater** A proposal within Source Protection Zone 1 or within 50m of a private potable groundwater source that includes any of the following development types will only be supported where adequate safeguards against possible contamination can be agreed, implemented and maintained: • septic tanks, waste water treatment works, chemicals storage tanks or underground storage tanks; • sustainable drainage systems with ground infiltration; • oil pipelines; • storm water overflows and below ground attenuation tanks; • activities that involve the disposal of liquid waste to land; • cemeteries and graveyards; or • other types of development identified in the Environment Agency's Groundwater Protection guides, or successor documents. A proposal within a SPZ 2 or 3 or on a principal or secondary aquifer will be considered on a risk based approach with the exception of development involving sewerage, trade and storm effluent to ground or deep soakaways, which will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that these are necessary, are the only option available and adequate safeguards against possible contamination of groundwater can be agreed, implemented and maintained. A proposal in any SPZ will be expected to provide full details of the proposed construction of new buildings and construction techniques, including foundation design.	**Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*,** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. These would be secured by a Requirement of the DCO and the details would be subject to approval by the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). Through the implementation of incorporated and additional mitigation measures there would be no significant residual effects on human health, groundwater, surface water, ecology, land and livestock receptors or buildings/ground stability during the construction phase.

6.0 CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN

6.1.1 Table 5 sets out policy requirements from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Table 1: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Section 4 Minerals Development Specific Policy		
Policy 5 Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSA)	Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) are identified on the Policies Map for mineral resources of local and/or national importance. The Mineral Planning Authority must be consulted on all development proposals in these areas except: a) development that falls within a settlement boundary*; b) development which is consistent with an allocation in the Development Plan for the area; c) minor householder development within the immediate curtilage of an existing residential building; d) demolition or replacement of residential buildings; e) temporary structures; f) advertisements; g) listed building consent; and h) works to trees or removal of hedgerows. Development within MSA not covered by the exceptions will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that: i) the mineral can be extracted where practicable prior to development taking place; or j) the mineral concerned is demonstrated to not be of current or future value; or k) the development will not prejudice future extraction of the mineral; or l) there is an overriding need for the development (where prior extraction is not feasible)**. * a 'settlement boundary' is that which is defined on the relevant Policies Map for the area (e.g. a village envelope or urban area boundary). If no such boundary is identified on the Policies Map, it will constitute the edge of the built form of the settlement or, should an edge be defined in words (rather than map form) in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan, then that definition will be used for that local area. ** within (l), 'overriding need' will need to be judged in the planning balance when any planning application is assessed, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy. That judgement should also consider the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the MSA, or	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, whilst there are various mineral reserves within the order limits there are a number of reasons why the Scheme remains acceptable.in the context of prevailing mineral safeguarding policy, which comprise: • it is apparent from a review of the adopted minerals and waste plans that there is currently no strategy to seek extraction of any of the mineral reserves / mineral safeguarding areas within the Order Limits. • The mineral reserves are large and are not wholly within the order limits, thus a proportion of the safeguarded mineral resource would remain availiable for the duration of the Scheme. • the Scheme would comprise temporary development and each phase would be decommissioned after 40 years. Any impacts caused by the Scheme are considered reversible and temporary and as such, the minerals contained within the Order Limits would not be permanently sterilised and, post decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Scheme would not result in the sterilisation of any mineral reserves. The three local planning authorities have all reviewed the land and soils chapter at the PEIR stage and none have provided any comment on the sterilisation of minerals. As such, at this stage it is assumed they do not have any concerns on the matter.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	meeting the need for it in some other way. By 'not feasible' in (l), this could include viability reasons.	

7.0 BEDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2030

7.1.1 Table 6 sets out policy requirements from the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.

Table 1: Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Section 5 Health		
Policy 2S Healthy Communities	The Council will support programmes and strategies which aim to reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles and will: i. Carry out Health Impact Assessments, which may be incorporated into sustainability appraisals, on all planning policy documents.	A standalone Health Impact Assessment was scoped out of the Environmental Statement as per the Scoping Opinion issued by the Planning Inspectorate (provided in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-2: EIA Scoping Opinion [EN010141/DR/6.2]**). However, an assessment of the 'wider determinants of health' in relation to the Scheme has been undertaken in Section 16.2 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. Table 16.3 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics [EN010141/DR/6.1]** outlines that it is unlikely for there to be significant adverse health effects arising from the Scheme once mitigation is applied.
Section 6 Strategy		
Policy 3S Spatial Strategy	To deliver sustainable development and growth that enhances the vitality of the borough's urban and rural communities, all new development will be required to contribute towards achieving the stated objectives and policies of this plan through: i. Maintaining and enhancing Bedford town centre as the preferred location for retail, leisure, visitor economy and office development. ii. Establishing vibrant new areas for urban living in Bedford's urban core on land south of the river, Greyfriars, Bedford station and Ford End Road. iii. Building on and expanding the town's employment base with a focus on strategic locations related to the primary road network in the context of increasing east-west connectivity through road and rail improvements. iv. The completion of Wixams new settlement and strategic urban and village extensions to the west of Bedford, at Wootton, Stewartby and Shortstown. v. A strategic village expansion utilising brownfield land at Stewartby. vi. Strategic residential development in key service centres in association expanded education provision where necessary. vii. Limited development in rural service centres in line with existing and potential capacity of infrastructure and services. viii. Safeguarding the intrinsic character of the countryside and the environment and biodiversity within it (to fulfil the requirements of European directives) through the careful management of development to meet local needs whilst supporting the rural economy. Delivering the majority of rural growth through neighbourhood plans.	The Policy sets out the development strategy for Bedford, it is clear by reference to the policy wording that the primary intention of the development strategy is to control the development of housing, retail, leisure and employment generating development. Thus, its purpose is not to necessarily control the type of development proposed by the Scheme. The Policy does not explicitly preclude development beyond the main urban areas, key service centres and rural settlements, but rather requires most development to be concentrated / targeted on these areas and if outside these areas, development should safeguard the intrinsic character of the countryside and the environment and biodiversity within it, whilst supporting the rural economy. The approach taken to site selection is set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternative and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** along with supporting appendices, including **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2] and ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-5 Review of Site Identification Report following designation of National Policy Statement EN-3 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** The ES chapter and associated reports set out in detail the planning policy based, structured, approach the Applicant has taken to site selection, the alternatives that were considered and the detailed justification for selecting the Site and the proposed Order Limits.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Section 6 Strategy		
Policy 7S Development in the Countryside	Development outside defined Settlement Policy Areas and the built form of Small Settlements will be permitted if it is appropriate in the countryside in accordance with: v. Neighbourhood Development Plans which have been 'made' by Bedford Borough Council. In addition, exceptionally development proposals will be supported on sites that are well-related to a defined Settlement Policy Area, Small Settlements or the built form of other settlements where it can be demonstrated that: vi. It responds to an identified community need; and vii. There is identifiable community support and it is made or supported by the parish council or, where there is no parish council, another properly constituted body which fully represents the local community; and viii. Its scale is appropriate to serve local needs or to support local facilities; and ix. The development contributes positively to the character of the settlement and the scheme is appropriate to the structure, form, character and size of the settlement. All development in the countryside must: xi. Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and xii. Not give rise to other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others; and xiii. Not give rise to other impacts that would have a significant adverse effect on the environment, biodiversity or designated Natura 2000 sites.	The Applicant has detailed its compliance with the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan in Section 10.0 of this document. The potential benefits of the Scheme in relation to the local area and community are outlined in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**. Engagement with local parish councils has been outlined in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]** and subsequent appendices. Regarding potential impacts on the character and enjoyment of the countryside, the Applicant has addressed this in the following ways: • The Applicant has prepared a LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition*. The LVIA concludes that there would be residual Significant adverse effects for users of the existing public right of way network through the Site. Mitigation has been identified to reduce these effects as far as possible and for many of the public rights of way, the effects would be reduced to 'Not Significant' after 10 years, following establishment of mitigation planting. • **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that the Scheme will not result in any significant residual adverse effects upon ecological receptors.
Section 8 Place Making		
Policy 28S Place Making	Development will be expected to contribute to good place-making. This will be achieved by requiring development proposals: i. To be of a high quality in terms of design and to promote local distinctiveness, and ii. To have a positive relationship with the surrounding area, integrating well with and complementing the character of the area in which the development is located, and iii. To contribute to provision of green infrastructure, and iv. To enhance the landscape, and v. To take a proactive approach to sustaining and where appropriate enhancing the historic environment, and	The Applicant has prepared a **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** which sets out the design process that has been followed from inception of the project to submission of the DCO, and how the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Good Design has been followed. It explains: • how the design vision and design principles have guided the design process, • how the design of the Scheme has evolved through each stage of the pre-application development process, • how consultation feedback at each stage has guided design changes, and • how the outcomes of environmental surveys and assessment (including all of the relevant topics listed in the policy wording) have been integrated with the process.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	vi. To avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity assets including, but not limited to, the Natura 2000 sites outside Bedford borough listed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appendix 1) and vii. To respond to the unique character and importance of the River Great Ouse and its setting, and viii. To include appropriate landscaping, and ix. To contribute to the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale (when within or close to the Forest of Marston Vale area)	Section 6.0 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out how good design would be secured as part of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the established design principles will be integrated within the final design post consent. The Design Principles (set out within Section 3.0 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**) have been used to fundamentally guide and shape the approach to the design of the Scheme.
Policy 29 Design Quality and Principles	All new development should: i. Be of the highest design quality and contribute positively to the area's character and identity, and ii. Respect the context within which it will sit and the opportunities to enhance the character and quality of the area and local distinctiveness, and iii. Protect and where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings and successfully integrate with the historic environment and character, and iv. Have particular regard to the environment and biodiversity within it and ensure there are no significant effects on Natura 2000 sites (notably Portholme (SAC), The Ouse Washes (SAC/ SPA, Ramsar), Eversden and Wimpole Woods (SAC), Upper River Nene Gravel Pits (SPA/Ramsar)) designated species or habitats. v. Promote accessibility and permeability for all by creating safe and welcoming places that connect with each other, and vi. Promote a sense of place to include attractive streets squares and other public spaces with a defined sense of enclosure, with multifunctional green spaces and corridors, and vii. Incorporate measures to promote community safety ensuring that private and public amenity spaces are clearly defined and are designed to be inclusive, useable safe and enjoyable, and viii. Integrate functional needs such as refuse / recycling storage and collection points, car and cycle parking. Proposals meeting the following criteria will be expected to be guided by a design code to be agreed with the local planning authority as part of the application process: ix. Proposals for residential developments of 200 dwellings or more. x. Proposals for residential developments of 50 dwellings or more in areas with a historic urban form or where the landscape interface with the built form is of importance. xi. Other large scale developments. The need for a design code should be discussed with the Council pre-application.	

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Policy 30 The Impact of Development – Design Impacts	Development proposals should take account of the principles of good design. Planning applications should give particular attention to all of the following considerations: i. The relationship of the development with the context in which it is placed, including overdevelopment; the contribution buildings will make to the townscape and landscape qualities of the area; and where appropriate, the extent to which local distinctiveness is reinforced or created. ii. The quality of the development in terms of scale, density, massing, height, materials and layout, including the provision of private space where appropriate. iii. The quality of the public spaces created by new buildings in terms of public safety, hard and soft landscaping, and how buildings interact with public space. Developers will be required to implement or contribute towards measures to mitigate adverse impacts. Planning permission will not be granted where proposals fail to improve the character and quality of an area.	
Policy 31 The Impact of Development – Access Impacts	Development proposals should not have any significant adverse impact on access to the public highway. Planning applications should give particular attention to all of the following considerations: i. Highway capacity, parking provision, safety or general disturbance to the area. ii. The extent to which the development is served by, and makes provision for access by public transport, cyclists and pedestrians. iii. The suitability of access arrangements to and within the development for all members of the community, including: pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities. iv. The suitability of access arrangements to and within the development for service and emergency vehicles. Developers will be required to implement or contribute towards measures to mitigate adverse impacts	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** sets out the access arrangements that would be put in place for the construction and operational phases of the Scheme. The anticipated traffic generation is also provided, with staff trips expected to be made by a combination of cars and minibuses. Temporary parking would be provided within the Order Limits for the duration of the construction phase. Forecast HGV movements during the construction phase are set out within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2].** The Assessment also confirms that vehicular access can be provided for all vehicles requited at the site during the construction and operational phase in all parts of the Scheme. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. This includes plans to provide information packs and site inductions to all contractors/drivers and HGV management measures, including details of timing restrictions, parking and traffic marshalling arrangements. Parking and welfare facilities would be provided on Site within the temporary construction compounds and would be used by HGV drivers as required. The overall rationale and strategy for the construction access has been to reduce the number of vehicle movements on the public highway and through existing settlements and it has been possible to route most of the construction vehicle movements through the Site itself. A requirement of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** would ensure these measures set out in the **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]** are developed in detail and complied with. The Scheme would not require the creation or introduction of any additional transport infrastructure. However, it does include for the improvement of existing footpaths and cycle routes, creation of new permissive paths (in Site B) for walking and cycling, provision of wayfinding signage and information, and interpretative material. These measures are set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** and outline Landscape **and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7].**

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
		Some localised, temporary PRoW diversions are expected to be required during the construction phase, as described within the **outline Public Right of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.8]**. However, all existing public rights of way would be retained throughout the operational phase. Reference to these works is summarised in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1].** **ES Vol 1 Appendix 9-1: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1**] confirms that the anticipated effect of the Scheme during all phases of the Scheme regarding Traffic and Transport would be negligible or minor in the context of Driver Delay, Accidents & Safety, Pedestrian Delay, Severance, NMU Amenity and Fear & Intimidation, and neutral in relation to public transport. The residual effects are therefore negligible, and not significant in EIA terms. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** includes forecast HGV movements and confirms that during the construction phase (where there will be the greatest level of traffic generation)**.** This confirms that the residual impact of the Scheme would not be severe. There would be no impacts during the operational phase due to the very limited vehicle movements that would be generated by the Scheme once operational.
Policy 32 – The Impact of Development – Disturbance and Pollution Impacts	Development proposals should ensure that they minimise and take account of the effects of pollution and disturbance. Planning applications should give particular attention to all of the following considerations: i. Noise, vibration, smell, harmful emissions, impact on water quality, light glare or other disturbance or pollution which is likely to be generated by the development. ii. The existing tranquillity of the area. iii. The suitability of the existing environment in relation to nuisance or pollution in the vicinity of the site. iv. Factors which might give rise to disturbance to neighbours and the surrounding community, including overlooking, crime and community safety concerns. v. Arrangements for dealing with waste (including recyclable materials) storage and collection. vi. The impact of development on locally, nationally and internationally important habitats (including Natura 2000 sites) as a result of changes in ground water and surface water. Developers will be required to implement or contribute towards measures to mitigate adverse impacts.	The Applicant has prepared a **Statutory Nuisance Statement *[EN010141/DR/5.4]*** which sets out the potential sources of nuisance as defined under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Statutory Nuisance Statement concludes that, the mitigation measures that are set out in the ES and other supporting documents for the DCO application would prevent, reduce, or avoid impacts that would have the potential to result in a statutory nuisance. These measures would be formally secured by requirements within the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]*** which sets out mitigation measures (such as best practice measures) to mitigate construction phase effects. They have also prepared an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.5]** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.6]** which sets out the same for those phases of the Scheme. The final CEMP, OEMP and DEMP would be secured via DCO Requirements, as set out in Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1** As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]** mitigation measures would be put in place to prevent effects on groundwater resources, including implementation of the measures set out in the aforementioned Management Plans. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1] confirms that the Scheme would not give rise to any significant residual adverse effects on** locally, nationally and internationally important habitats (including Natura 2000 sites).
Policy 33 The impact of development – infrastructure impacts	Development proposals should ensure that they do not have a harmful impact (including cumulative impact with other development) on the adequacy of existing infrastructure, for example on utilities, schools, health and community facilities. Developers will be required to implement or contribute towards measures to mitigate adverse impacts.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out the existing baseline for the assessment of socio-economic and tourism conditions in the areas within and surrounding the Order Limits. This includes population and deprivation; employment; local economy and labour market; local services; community facilities; visitor attractions and visitor accommodation. The assessment confirms that there would be no significant adverse effects on community facilities, the availability of hotel accommodation or local businesses because of the Scheme.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
		The construction phase is not considered likely to affect local healthcare provision as it is assumed all contractors would have their own private healthcare arrangements which would negate the need for construction workers to use or sign up with local GP surgeries / health centres. In terms of utilities, the only utility that would be required in connection with the scheme is water (for fire suppression and landscape maintenance). As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme will only require a limited supply of water which can be provided by existing Pump House located close to the Main Site Access north of Site D on the B645. The Applicant has consulted with Anglian Water regarding water supply, as set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. Whilst no formal agreement has been reached over water supply, following discussion with Anglian Water the Applicant has provided an assumption regarding the likely water requirements for the Scheme (see **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**, and the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]**) Following discussion with Anglian Water the Applicant has also included the Pump House east of Great Staughton within the Order Limits, to provide a water main to the Site, if required. They are also proposing rainwater harvesting of roof water from the maintenance buildings next to the BESS to partly offset the Scheme's overall water requirements.
Policy 35S Green Infrastructure	The existing green infrastructure in the borough shall be protected, enhanced and managed for the future benefit of the environment, people and the economy. Development shall provide a net gain in green infrastructure, while seeking to provide a high quality multi-functional green infrastructure network in accordance with the Bedford Green Infrastructure Plan. The Council will work with developers and other partners to deliver the three strategic green infrastructure projects: the Forest of Marston Vale, the Bedford River Valley Park and the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park.	As noted in the policy wording three strategic green infrastructure projects / areas have been identified within Bedford and the extent of each is illustrated on 'The Key Diagram' and shown on the Local Plan Policies Map. Whilst the Order Limits do not encapsulate any of the strategic green infrastructure projects / areas the provision of green infrastructure has nevertheless been a significant consideration for the Applicant in developing the Scheme. The impacts of the Scheme on green infrastructure and the associated mitigation and compensation, is dealt with in a number of documents prepared in support of the DCO application, as follows: i. Impacts on public rights of way are considered in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1], ES Vol 1 Chapter 14: Socio Economics, Land Use and Tourism [EN010141/DR/6.1]** with mitigation set out in the **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.14]** ii. Impacts on Habitats and networks are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** which sets out how existing and proposed green infrastructure will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme. iii. watercourses and drainage networks are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1**] iv. soils resources are addressed in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]** Requirements are proposed within the **draft Development Consent Order [EN010141/DR/3.1]** to ensure the delivery of the relevant green infrastructure mitigation / enhancement measures. The outcome of the abovementioned assessment work has been factored into design and as set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** and the **outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.14]**, The Scheme would result in minimal loss of existing green infrastructure whilst delivering significant gains / benefits across the Site. In doing so it is entirely in line with the relevent requirements of Policy 35.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
		The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.7]** that sets out how existing and proposed green infrastructure will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme.
Policy 37 Landscape Character	Development proposals will protect and enhance the key landscape features and visual sensitivities of the landscape character areas identified in the Bedford Borough Landscape Character Assessment May 2014 (or as subsequently amended). Proposals will be required to: i. Where appropriate incorporate and implement the landscape management guidelines and development guidelines laid out in the BBLCA, and ii. Protect and enhance the character and qualities of the local landscape through appropriate design and management, and iii. Make provision for the retention and enhancement of features of landscape importance, and iv. Safeguard and where possible, enhance key views and vistas, and v. Protect the landscape setting and contribute to maintaining the individual and distinct character, and separate identities of settlements by preventing coalescence, and vi. Where appropriate, provide landscape mitigation.	The effects on landscape character are summarised in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1],**and assessed in detail in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 5-3: Effects on Landscape Character [EN010141/DR/6.2].** The assessment considers the effects of the scheme on 5 Landscape Character Areas (LCA's), comprising LCA 1B Riseley Clay Farmland, Northern Wolds LCA, Southern Wolds LCA, LCA 1D Thurleigh Clay Farmland, LCA 4A Great Ouse Clay Valley. The landscape character of the Site and its immediate setting would be affected to the greatest degree within the two central character areas within the study area: LCA 1B and Southern Wolds LCA and significant landscape effects have been identified on these host character areas during construction. In the operational phase the assessment of effects on landscape character areas is more nuanced and comprises: • On LCA 1B, the level of effect during Year 0 of operation of the Scheme would be Moderate-Major Adverse which is Significant. At Year 10, mitigation planting would have established such that there would be a Moderate Adverse level of effect which is Not Significant. • On Southern Wolds LCA, the level of effect during operation of the Scheme would be at Year 0 would be Moderate Adverse which is Not Significant in EIA terms. At Year 10, mitigation planting would have established such that there would be a Minor-Moderate Adverse level of effect which remains Not Significant. The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**.weighs the negative impacts on landscape character against the benefits of the scheme, concluding that the overall benefits of the Scheme significantly outweigh any disbenefits.
Policy 38 – Landscaping in New Development	Where appropriate, development shall provide landscaping on site or where more suitable, landscaping shall be provided off site and the proposed scheme shall meet all of the following criteria: i. Existing landscape features shall be recorded in a detailed site survey in accordance with the principles of the relevant industry guidance and best practice. ii. Existing features of landscape or nature conservation value should be incorporated into the landscaping scheme. iii. The proposed landscaping scheme should consider the character of the site, site constraints, function, diversity of existing and proposed landscaping, soil type, ecological value and resilience based on the location of the site. iv. New tree planting as part of a proposed landscaping scheme will be selected, planted and established in accordance with current best practice guidance within the relevant British Standard and shall have regard to guidance in the Council's Trees and Development SPD. v. Provision of the planting of hedgerows, shrub planting and other soft landscaping to include specimen trees with a mature height of 15-20 metres within both hard and soft landscaped areas.	The Applicant has planned to achieve environmental gains from the outset of the Scheme. The design team includes Landscape Architects and Ecologists who have developed the **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** to achieve both mitigation of the Scheme's adverse impacts, as well as opportunities for enhancement. Such opportunities have included the retention of public rights of way, provision of new permissive paths(in Site B), retention of existing trees, scrub and hedgerows as far as possible, and provision of new grassland, hedgerow and woodland habitats. Whist it is not currently a mandatory requirement for NSIP Schemes(it is expected to become mandatory for NSIPs from May 2026), for robustness the biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment has been undertaken in accordance with DEFRA's latest Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and the calculation is presented in full within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** confirms that there will be a gain of 79.51% in area-based habitat units, 36.91% in hedgerow units, and 5.95% in watercourse units. While a 10% gain is not achieved in relation to watercourses, the habitat creation measures as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals and to be secured through the **oLEMP [EN010141/DR/7.7]** will enhance the bank top habitat of ditches and watercourses throughout the Site. However, as a result of failures of baseline ditch condition assessment criteria related principally to low water levels and frequent drying (which is outside the control of the Scheme), the bankside habitat enhancement is not taken as enhancing the condition of watercourses within the Metric. Therefore, whilst the Scheme achieves no net loss of watercourse units, the quantitative gain in the Metric does not achieve 10%. The Scheme proposals nonetheless represent a qualitative gain of value to local biodiversity.

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	vi. The proposed landscaping shall make a positive contribution to the streetscape and integrate with the built development and where applicable, adjoining developments. vii. Trees within adoptable areas shall be incorporated as part of the infrastructure planning and design stage in accordance with current best practice and shall have regard to the Council's guidance in the Trees and Development SPD ensuring sustainability and longevity. viii. The proposed landscaping should not lead to significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites of Portholme (SAC) and the Ouse Washes (SAC/SPA/ Ramsar), as a result of surface run-off into the River Great Ouse.	Overall, it is concluded in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** that the Scheme will deliver a net gain for biodiversity, and that the change in units generated as part of the Scheme are proportionate to the levels of impact, with the Scheme providing other qualitative measures to enhance biodiversity At the detailed design stage the Applicant will seek to maximise BNG as far as practicable (as per Design Principle 4.1 secured by the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]**). It may ultimately be possible to achieve a greater BNG for all habitat types compared to the current assessment of the illustrative design. Nonetheless, as the assessment has been based on an illustrative design, out of caution and to avoid any future compliance issue, the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of: • 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**, particularly with regard to watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy. Further discussion on this matter is presented in Section 7 of the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3].**
Policy 39 Retention of Trees	In considering proposals for development all of the following criteria will apply: i. Applicants shall consider opportunities to retain trees of high amenity and environmental value taking into consideration both their individual merit and their contribution as part of a group or broader landscape feature. Existing trees on and immediately adjacent the development site shall be recorded following guidance in the relevant British Standard. ii. Development applications shall provide details as to how the retained trees, hedges and hedge banks will be protected prior to, during and after construction. iii. No building, hard surfacing drainage or underground works will be permitted that does not accord with the principles of the relevant British Standard unless, exceptionally, the Council is satisfied that such works can be accommodated without harm to the trees concerned or there are overriding reasons for development to proceed. iv. Planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland (including from indirect impacts such as increased visitor pressure), unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. v. The Council will protect existing trees through the making of Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate.	The Applicant has undertaken an Arboricultural Assessment **ES Vol 2 Appendix 2-2: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** of the existing trees and woodlands within the Site. This confirms that the construction of the Scheme would only necessitate the loss of two trees. It also confirms that a further 12 trees have been identified which are in very poor condition and merit removal. The survey has not identified any ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats within the order limits. Hedgerow habitats would also be almost entirely retained as part of the Scheme and protected with buffer zones of at least 6m. The only exception would be small-scale removal / widening required to permit Site access at ten locations, totalling 54m with no individual length of removal greater than 6m. Post-construction seven of the crossing points, totalling 37m, would be reinstated. Mitigation measures to avoid and minimise adverse effects to trees, woodland and hedgerow are set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***. Similarly, an **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]*** have been prepared to cover the operational and decommissioning phases respectively. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.7]*** that sets out how existing and proposed trees, woodland and hedgerows will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme. Set against the very small loss of trees and hedgerow is the extensive landscape and biodiversity enhancement proposals that are proposed in connection with the Scheme. These proposals are set out

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Policy 40 Hedgerows	Any hedgerows should be retained on development sites, unless there are overriding benefits that justify their removal. Where removal is deemed necessary, details addressing the criteria under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (as amended) shall be submitted to demonstrate the validity for removal and details of the replacement hedgerows. Replacement hedgerows shall be of an equal scale, native and species-rich and should be provided where possible, elsewhere on the development site. Where there are gaps in the existing hedgerows on the site, the development should provide for additional hedgerow planting.	in the **outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]** and **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/6.3].** The illustrative landscape proposals shown on **ES Volume 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** include the planting of over 17km of native species hedgerow 19 ha of woodland and 375 individual trees.
Policy 41S Historic Environment and Heritage Assets	Where a proposal would affect a heritage asset the applicant will be required to describe : a. The significance of the asset including any contribution made by its setting and impacts of the proposal on this significance, and b. The justification for the proposal, how it seeks to preserve or enhance the asset/setting or where this is not possible, how it seeks to minimise the harm. This description must be in the form of one or a combination of: a desk based assessment; heritage statement; heritage impact assessment; and/or archaeological field evaluation. Further information will be requested where applicants have failed to provide assessment proportionate to the significance of the assets affected and sufficient to inform the decision-making process. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset or non-designated heritage asset of archaeological interest of demonstrably equivalent significance to a scheduled monument, consent will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. In considering proposals affecting designated heritage assets or a non-designated heritage asset of archaeological interest of demonstrably equivalent significance to a scheduled monument, involving their alteration, extension, demolition, change of use and/or development in their setting, the Council will include in their consideration as appropriate: a. The asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interest and any contribution to its significance from setting (including the wider historic landscape) b. scale, form, layout, density, design, quality and type of materials, and architectural detailing	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the Scheme on heritage assets, their settings and buried archaeology. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-1: Gazetteer of Heritage Assets and Events [EN010141/DR/6.2]** provides a description of all heritage assets identified within the Study Areas, The identified and potential non-designated heritage assets which may be subject to direct and indirect impacts are presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. Descriptions of all heritage assets identified within the study areas are included within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-1 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** with further discussion of the identified heritage baseline (formed by these assets) presented in Section 3 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2 [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** presents the methodology and approach to for establishing the relative sensitivity of a Heritage Asset to changes to its setting. The assessment of potential setting effects includes descriptions of the significance of the settings of the heritage assets as is presented in Table 1 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and in Section 6.8 o **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** An **outline Heritage Enhancement Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.16]** has also been produced which contains recommended measures for making a positive contribution to the historic environment. These measures are also presented in Paragraphs 6.7.33 to 6.7.36 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment of potential settings effects has identified temporary significant effects upon the settings of the Old Manor House, Cretingsbury: a motte castle and moated manor house Scheduled Monument (Asset 4) to the east of Little Staughton, the Grade I Listed Church of All Saints (Asset 38), to the east of Little Staughton, the Roman small town south of Great Staughton Scheduled Monument (Asset 991) within the northern part of Site C and the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western part of Site D during the construction phase. The assessment has also established that the operational phase of the Scheme would have a significant effect (in EIA terms) upon the setting of a single heritage asset, which is upon the setting of the non-designated possible moated site (Asset 407) within the north-western corner of Site D. As the overall significance of this asset will remain intact and appreciable following development of the Scheme, the level of harm is considered to be 'less than substantial'. The policy test in NPS EN-1 specifies that this 'less than substantial' harm this 'should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. As set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, the Scheme is CNP infrastructure that would deliver substantial public benefits. This is supported by paragraph 4.2.16 of NPS EN-1 which confirms that CNP infrastructure should be treated as meeting any test which requires a clear outweighing of harm. No other significant effects have been identified upon the settings of any of the other heritage assets.

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	c. boundary treatments and means of enclosure d. implications of associated car parking, services and other environmental factors e. effect on streetscape, roofscape and skyline including important views within, into or out of heritage assets f. impact on open space which contributes positively to the character and/or appearance of heritage assets g. the positive benefits of the proposal in addressing heritage at risk. Where heritage assets are included on a Local List and are affected by development proposals the Council will afford weight proportionate to their heritage significance in the decision-making process to protect and conserve the significance which underpins their inclusion. Partial or total loss adversely impacting this significance will require clear and convincing justification. The effect of proposals on the significance of non-designated heritage assets will be taken into account in determining applications for development. Applications which result in harm or loss of significance to non-designated heritage assets will only be supported if clear and convincing justification has been demonstrated. In making a decision, the Council will weigh the significance of the heritage asset affected against the scale of any harm or loss to it. Where applications are permitted which will result in (total or partial) loss to a heritage asset's significance (including where preservation in situ of buried archaeological remains is not necessary or feasible), applicants will be required to arrange for further assessment of and recording of this significance in advance of, and where required, during development/works. This assessment and recording must be undertaken by a suitably qualified specialist in accordance with a design brief set by the Council's Historic Environment Team. The work might include: - archaeological and/or historic building fieldwork, - post-excavation/recording assessment, analysis, interpretation, - archiving with the local depository, and - presentation to the public of the results and finds in a form to be agreed with the Council. As a minimum, presentation of the results should be submitted to the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record and where appropriate, will be required at the asset itself through on-site interpretation.	In terms of buried remains, it will be possible to mitigate or offset any potential direct impacts on significant archaeological remains through design (avoidance), utilisation of 'no dig solutions (reducing the level of impact) or through programmes of archaeological monitoring, excavation and recording which would allow any remains to be 'preserved by record'. Therefore, direct effects would either be avoided, minimised or off-set.
Policy 42S Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Planning applications for development are required to assess the impact of the proposal on the biodiversity and geodiversity value of the site and its surroundings. This should be carried out by a suitably qualified professional in accordance with industry standards. A proposal which is likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Natura 2000 site will not be permitted unless there are exceptional reasons that outweigh the harm to the site. Development should be designed to prevent any adverse impact on locally important sites, species and habitats of principal importance contained within the Natural	The Applicant has taken an environmentally-led approach to masterplanning the Scheme from the inception of the project, as reported in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.8]**. This has included identifying from the outset the specific constraints of the Site, the condition and type of habitats present, and the species that these habitats support, or could support. By retaining existing habitats and supplementing them with complimentary habitats the Scheme has taken a holistic approach to ecosystem enhancement and habitat connectivity. enhancements such as enhanced recreational access to deliver wider environmental benefits. The Applicant has undertaken comprehensive ecological surveys across the Order limits to identify ecological species and habitats that could be impacted by the Scheme. The ecological baseline of the

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	Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. However, in these circumstances where an adverse impact is unavoidable, the application shall demonstrate how the harm will be reduced through appropriate mitigation. Where protected species or priority habitats of principal importance are adversely affected, the application will need to demonstrate how the proposed mitigation will reduce the adverse effects. If adequate mitigation is not possible, the application will need to demonstrate that the overriding reasons outweigh the impacts on the biodiversity and geodiversity of the borough otherwise the development will be refused. Developments with potential to have an adverse impact, either alone or in-combination, on the integrity of a European Designated Site will be assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations.	site is set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and associated appendices, particularly **ES Vol 2 Appendix 7-1: Ecological Baseline Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** draws the following overall conclusions regarding the residual effects of the Scheme on habitats and species**.** • The Scheme will not result in **any** significant residual adverse effects upon ecological receptors. • During the construction phase the Scheme would result in short term and temporary minor adverse effects on ground nesting birds, the wider breeding bird assemblage, amphibians (including great crested newt) and otter. These effects would not be significant in EIA terms. • During the operational phase the Scheme would result in **significant beneficial effects** on priority habitats, other breeding birds and on foraging and commuting bats and will result in beneficial (not significant) effects for other ecological receptors. • During the operational phase the Scheme would also result in non-significant beneficial effects to on-site habitats; roosting bats; amphibians; reptiles; and other notable species (including flora, invertebrates, mammals and fish). The benefits would be realised for the duration of the Scheme's operational lifespan (40 years). The Applicant has planned to achieve environmental gains from the outset of the Scheme. The design team includes Landscape Architects and Ecologists who have developed the **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** to achieve both mitigation of the Scheme's adverse impacts, as well as opportunities for enhancement. Such opportunities have included the retention of existing trees, scrub and hedgerows as far as possible, and provision of new grassland, hedgerow and woodland habitats. Whist it is not currently a mandatory requirement for NSIP Schemes(it is expected to become mandatory for NSIPs from May 2026), for robustness the biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment has been undertaken in accordance with DEFRA's latest Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and the calculation is presented in full within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]**. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** confirms that there will be a gain of 79.51% in area-based habitat units, 36.91% in hedgerow units, and 5.95% in watercourse units. While a 10% gain is not achieved in relation to watercourses, the habitat creation measures as shown on the Illustrative Landscape Proposals and to be secured through the **oLEMP [EN010141/DR/7.7]** will enhance the bank top habitat of ditches and watercourses throughout the Site. However, as a result of failures of baseline ditch condition assessment criteria related principally to low water levels and frequent drying (which is outside the control of the Scheme), the bankside habitat enhancement is not taken as enhancing the condition of watercourses within the Metric. Therefore, whilst the Scheme achieves no net loss of watercourse units, the quantitative gain in the Metric does not achieve 10%. The Scheme proposals nonetheless represent a qualitative gain of value to local biodiversity. Overall, it is concluded in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17]** that the Scheme will deliver a net gain for biodiversity, and that the change in units generated as part of the Scheme are proportionate to the levels of impact, with the Scheme providing other qualitative measures to enhance biodiversity At the detailed design stage the Applicant will seek to maximise BNG as far as practicable (as per Design Principle 4.1 secured by the **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1])**. It may ultimately be possible to achieve a greater BNG for all habitat types compared to the current assessment of the illustrative design. Nonetheless, as the assessment has been based on an illustrative design, out of caution and to avoid any future compliance issue, the Applicant is electing to claim and commit to a future BNG of:
Policy 43 Enhancing Biodiversity	Development proposals should provide a net increase in biodiversity through the following: i. Enhancement of the existing features on the site; or ii. The creation of additional habitats on the site; or iii. The linking of existing habitats to create links between ecological networks and where possible, with adjoining features.	

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		• 70% net gain in area-based habitat units; • 30% net gain in hedgerow units; and • 5% in watercourse units. This is less than assessed for the illustrative design but allows future flexibility if required at the detailed design stage. The Applicant will endeavour at that stage to meet or even exceed the higher BNG totals as assessed in the **BNG Report [EN010141/DR/7.17],** particularly in the context of watercourse units. Whichever figures are used The Scheme will leave biodiversity in a measurably better state, which is the cornerstone of both national and local policy.
Section 9 Resource and Climate Change		
Policy 46S Use of Previously Developed Land and Use of Undeveloped Land	The Council will seek to maximise the delivery of development through the reuse of suitably located previously developed land provided that it is not of high environmental or biodiversity value. Where significant development is demonstrated to be necessary on agricultural land, poorer quality land should be used in preference to the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1-3a). Where the site is located on agricultural land outside of existing settlements, applicants will be required to provide evidence of the grade of agricultural land and, where that land is likely to be grade 3 or higher, undertake a detailed survey of land quality.	The Scheme has followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts on land of a higher agricultural value where possible, beginning with the site selection stage reported in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2**]. The site identification exercise firstly considered brownfield / previously developed land within a 15km search radius of the point of connection at the Eaton Socon Substation. This land was not availiable, and the assessment ultimately concluded that that there was no Search Zone around the point of connection that was not constrained in some way, and that only by taking a balanced consideration of technical and environmental factors was it possible to select a search zone for the Site. The key determining factor in recommending the final Search Zone for the Site was that it was likely to have the most straightforward grid connection, which in turn would avoid and reduce environmental impacts, affect less landowners, and ensure that the Scheme remains commercially viable. In terms of agricultural land classification, it was established that the Site would be likely to include some areas of BMV land, but that with the evidence available it was unlikely to contain significantly greater or lesser extents of BMV land than any other area within 15km of the point of connection. NPS EN-3 is clear however (Paragraph 2.10.29) that '*land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location'*. The above measures set out the steps taken to avoid development of BMV land as far as practicable, being the first step in the mitigation hierarchy. To reduce and minimise impacts to soils, the mounting structures for the solar arrays utilise ram-driven posts for the arrays which do not require excavation, minimising soil disturbance and enabling reinstatement at decommissioning. The Applicant has prepared an **outline Soil Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.9]** that sets out how soils will be managed throughout the lifetime of the Scheme to minimise adverse impacts, including by committing to best practice guidance for soil handling. Mitigation measures are also set out within Section 13.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. In addition to the above, the Applicant has also partnered with Rothamsted Research to undertake scientific research on co-locating agricultural production with solar generation in the UK. This will include research into soil conditions across the Site over the operational phase of the Scheme. The research proposed as part of the 'Agrisolar Research Area' in East Park Site D will enhance an understanding of 'agrivoltaics' and their application within the UK.

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Policy 47S Pollution, Disturbance and Contaminated Land	All development proposals will be required to: i. Prevent the emission of significant levels of pollutants into the soil, air or water, and ii. Avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life or, where appropriate, mitigate and reduce its impact and iii. Avoid any significant impact of artificial light on local amenity. Details of any external lighting scheme required as part of a new development should be submitted with the application, and iv. Reduce as far as practicable other potential impacts including from: vibration, dust, mud on the highway, smoke, fumes, gases, odours, litter, birds or pests, and v. Be appropriate for their location, having regard to the existing noise, air quality, ground stability or pollution environment, including the proximity of pollutants, hazardous substances and noise generating or disruptive uses, and vi. Remediate and mitigate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land so that it is suitable for its proposed use. All minerals and waste development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that an adequate buffer zone exists between the proposed development and neighbouring existing or proposed sensitive land uses. The Council will resist development proposals within the buffer zone that could be adversely affected by the mineral or waste operation or could prejudice the ability of the operator to work the permission. Developers are required to submit sufficient information to enable development proposals to be properly assessed	The Applicant has undertaken an assessment of the existing ground conditions, which is provided as **ES Vol 1 Chapter 12: Ground Conditions [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The assessment is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 10-1: Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The Stage 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment has involved a walkover of the Site, comprehensive review of historic mapping, review of any historic site investigations (noting there are none). It also includes a review of information relating to potential unexploded ordnance (UXO); environmental information from BBC, HDC and CCC, the Environment Agency and other publicly available records There is sufficient Site information available to characterise the risks presented in conjunction with the Scheme and define the mitigation measures that would be required that is proportionate to the contamination presented. Whilst some potential contamination sources have been identified on Site, they are not significant and are limited to the infilling of former ponds, historic gravel pits or where existing buildings / agricultural activities are being carried out. The required mitigation measures to be employed during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases are set out in **outline Soil Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.9]***, as well as the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3]***, **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.5]*,** and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.6]***. These would be secured by a Requirement of the DCO and the details would be subject to approval by the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). Through the implementation of incorporated and additional mitigation measures there would be no significant residual effects on human health, groundwater, surface water, ecology, land and livestock receptors or buildings/ground stability during the construction phase.
Policy 49 Waste	Proposals that are likely to generate significant volumes of waste through the development or operational phases will be required to include a waste audit as part of the application. This audit should demonstrate that in both construction and operational phases of a proposed development, waste will be minimised as far as possible and that such waste as is generated will be managed in an appropriate manner in accordance with the waste hierarchy. In particular, the waste audit should include the following information: i. The anticipated nature and volumes of waste that the development will generate. ii. Where appropriate, the steps to be taken to ensure the maximum amount of waste arising from development on previously developed land is incorporated within the new development. iii. The steps to be taken to ensure effective segregation of wastes at source including, as appropriate, the provision of waste sorting, storage, recovery and recycling facilities. iv. Any other steps to be taken to manage the waste that cannot be incorporated within the new development or that arises once development is complete.	The overall approach to the management of waste at each phase of the development, together with the expected quantities of waste that is to be generated / managed in connection with the Scheme is set out in the **outline Waste Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.12].** This demonstrates how the Scheme will adopt the waste hierarchy (prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, other recovery, and disposal as a last resort) at every stage of the development.

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Policy 50S Water resources	Development must not adversely affect the quality, quantity and flow of both ground and surface water. Development should avoid designated Source Protection Zones unless it can be demonstrated that there would be no adverse effect from the proposal. Proposals involving non-mains drainage will only be considered acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible to connect to an existing public sewer and that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on ground or surface water.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** includes details of the lack of anticipated significant impacts upon groundwater and the proposed drainage strategy mitigating against the potential for run-off and scouring. The chapter also confirms that the Scheme would result in beneficial effects on water quality by changing the use of the land from active arable use and the associated use of pesticide and fertiliser that comes with intensive farming.
Policy 51S Climate Change Strategic Approach	The Council will require the development and use of land and buildings to address climate change, adapting to anticipated future changes and mitigating against further change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.	As set out in Section 2 **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** Scheme is essential for • closing critical gaps in the UK's renewable energy capacity, • meeting statutory climate obligations, • strengthening British energy security, and • for catalysing significant economic and environmental benefits at local, regional, and national scales It therefore clearly meets the core requirements of Policy 51S.
Policy 52 Water demand	All new development will be expected to minimise the use of water. Unless it can be demonstrated that it would make the development unviable, new residential development will be required to achieve the higher water efficiency standard in the Building Regulations. As currently set out in Approved Document G: Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency, 2015 edition, DCLG October 2015.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, the Scheme will only require a limited supply of water which can be provided by existing Pump House located close to the Main Site Access north of Site D on the B645. The Applicant has consulted with Anglian Water regarding water supply, as set out in the **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]**. Whilst no formal agreement has been reached over water supply, following discussion with Anglian Water the Applicant has provided an assumption regarding the likely water requirements for the Scheme (see **ES Vol 2 Appendix 15-1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**, and the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3]**) Following discussion with Anglian Water the Applicant has also included the Pump House east of Great Staughton within the Order Limits, to provide a water main to the Site, if required. They are also proposing rainwater harvesting of roof water from the maintenance buildings next to the BESS to partly offset the Scheme's overall water requirements.
Policy 53 – Development Layout and Accessibility	All development will be required to take available opportunities to integrate the principles of sustainable design and layout into proposals. Wherever possible development should: iii. Incorporate landscaping and open spaces, including suitable street tree planting.	The **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]** sets out how opportunities for environmental enhancement and opportunity, including landscaping and tree planting where suitable have been considered as part of the design process. **ES Volume 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]** presents the illustrative landscape proposals for the Scheme and includes the planting of over 17km of native species hedgerow, 19 ha of woodland, and 375 individual trees. The Applicant has also prepared an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.74]** that sets out how existing and proposed trees, woodland and hedgerows will be managed for the lifetime of the Scheme.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Policy 56 Renewable Energy – Broad Locations Suitable for Renewable Energy Development	Planning permission will be granted for large-scale (>100kW) wind and solar energy development where proposals are within the broad locations shown on Figures 12 and 13, and where proposals satisfy the requirements of Policy 57 on general impact, together with any other relevant planning considerations.	The Site is located within an area identified on Local Plan Figure 13 that is a mixture of land that identified as falling within and without the broad locations for solar development. However, the process by which the broad areas are identified is based upon a narrow number of criterion comprising agricultural land values, heritage assets and existing urban areas, which only comprise a small number of considerations in locating solar development, particularly large-scale solar development. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN010141/DR/6.1]** sets out the approach the Applicant has taken to site selection and consideration of potential alternative sites. It is supported by **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2], ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-3 Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-4 Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2].** In accordance with the government requirement to urgently deploy large scale ground-mounted solar across the UK, the Applicant wishes to utilise the available capacity at National Grid's Easton Socon substation and all necessary agreements are in place for use the spare grid capacity. The Site Identification Report **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1 Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** identifies sites or areas within a viable distance (15km) of the substation and then appraised those areas of land that are undeveloped (i.e. not urban) against the '*Factors Influencing Site Selection*' set out in Section 2.10 of NPS EN-3. The Site Identification Report and subsequent Land Identification Reports confirm that the Site is the most appropriate location for the Scheme, taking all relevent factors into account.
Policy 57 Renewable Energy – General Impact	Proposals for development involving the provision of renewable and/or low carbon energy generation, including community energy projects, will be supported, subject to the acceptability of their wider impacts. As part of such proposals, it shall be demonstrated that all of the following potential impacts (including cumulative impacts) have been fully addressed in consultation with affected local communities. General impacts: i. Context, visual appearance and landscape character. ii. Natural features, the natural environment, geology and biodiversity (including Natura 2000 sites). iii. Cultural features, historical and archaeological features, heritage assets and their settings. iv. Local land use, social and economic impacts. v. Surface and ground water. vi. Traffic and access Additional impacts for wind energy schemes vii. Amenity impacts – disturbance, noise, electromagnetic transmissions, shadow flicker, reflected light. viii. Safety. ix. Aviation and defence. x. Construction, future decommissioning and restoration. Additional impacts for solar energy schemes:	The Applicant has undertaken an EIA for the Scheme which is reported in the **Environmental Statement [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]**. The ES identifies the residual effects of the Scheme following the implementation of mitigation in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 18: Summary of Effects [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. No residual adverse effects have been identified that present an unacceptable risk to human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats, the achievement of net zero or an unacceptable interference to offshore navigation. Furthermore, as set out in the **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** the Scheme would not present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference with, flood risk or coastal erosion risk. The Scheme is a type of energy generation recognised in Part 3 of NPS EN-1 and therefore benefits from the starting presumption in favour of granting consent. This PCD provides a detailed appraisal of the policies contained within relevent planning policy documents and demonstrates overall compliance with all applicable policies. In conjunction with the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3**], the PCD demonstrates that the benefits of the Scheme clearly outweigh any adverse impacts, and that there are no relevant policies that clearly indicate consent should be refused. The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** provides a description of the benefits and adverse impacts of the Scheme (which includes consideration of environmental, social and economic benefits and adverse impacts at national, regional and local levels) and sets out the planning balance, concluding that the benefits clearly outweigh any and all adverse impacts.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	xi. Amenity impacts – disturbance, noise, glint and glare. xii. Best and most versatile agricultural land. xiii. Aviation. xiv. Security measures. xv. Construction, future decommissioning and restoration. Additional impacts for biomass and energy from waste schemes xvi. Amenity impacts – disturbance, noise, vibration, dust, and odour. xvii. Pollution and air quality. Applications for renewable energy schemes should be supported by sufficient supporting information to enable the effects of the proposal to be accurately assessed. Developers should engage with local communities in order to seek to mitigate impacts, demonstrating that the wider environmental, economic or social benefits of the scheme outweigh any adverse impacts.	
Section 11 Economy		
Policy 74 Employment skills	Development over 200 dwellings or 5ha of 'B' class uses must be accompanied by an Employment and Skills Plan to identify and implement opportunities for the employment and up-skilling of local people, unless the applicant can demonstrate that they already have an effective skills policy that achieves the same outcome. The Employment and Skills Plan should be informed by priorities identified through liaison with the Council, local employment and skills agencies. The target outcome of the Employment and Skills Plan will be commensurate with, and assessed against the construction industry standard benchmarks of the employment / skills outcomes expected from the particular size and type of construction proposed.	The **outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (OSSCEP) [EN010141/DR/7.11]** sets out the Applicant's strategy to maximise local employment, skills development and supply chain opportunities from the Scheme to enhance positive benefits for the local and regional community.
Section 12 Plan Implementation and Infrastructure Delivery		
Policy 86S Delivering Infrastructure	New development will be required to provide, or contribute towards the provision of, measures to directly mitigate its impact on existing infrastructure, which will be normally secured through the use of site specific planning obligations and/or Community Infrastructure Levy payments as permitted by regulations. Development proposals will need to clearly demonstrate that the infrastructure needed in accordance with the Council's standards, included in this plan and with reference to Supplementary Planning Documents, can be provided and phased to support the requirements of the proposed development. The Council will work with developers to seek to ensure that the most appropriate and beneficial solution is achieved.	Policy 86S is concerned with securing infrastructure necessary to directly mitigate the impacts of development, normally through site-specific obligations and/or a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where applicable. National CIL guidance confirms that structures which are not buildings, and buildings into which people do not normally go or only enter intermittently to inspect or maintain fixed plant or machinery, are not CIL chargeable. Bedford's CIL rate summary identifies 'other uses' (which the Scheme would fall under) as nil-rated, with chargeable categories focused on residential and qualifying retail development. Accordingly, the Scheme does not fall within Bedford's CIL charging requirements. Any necessary site-specific mitigation would instead be secured through the DCO, requirements, protective provisions and/or obligations where justified.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Policy 88 Impact of transport on people, places and environment	Planning applications shall demonstrate that the social and environmental impact of traffic from their proposals has been considered, in terms of all of the following: i. The impact on the Air Quality Management Area ii. The impact on resilience of the railway and highway networks iii. The impact on air quality generally and the control of noise and pollutants iv. Developing opportunities to enhance sustainable transport facilities v. The impact of freight movements on the local highway network vi. The impact of safety, in terms of site access arrangements and general road safety.	**ES Vol 1 Appendix 9-1: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1]** confirms that the anticipated effect of the Scheme during the construction phase regarding Traffic and Transport would be negligible or minor in the context of Driver Delay, Accidents & Safety, Pedestrian Delay, Severance, NMU Amenity and Fear & Intimidation, and neutral in relation to public transport. The residual effects are therefore negligible, and not significant in EIA terms. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** concludes that the Scheme will result in no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and that no severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be created by the Scheme. An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.4]** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. The traffic figures set out within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** have been used to inform the ES chapters on Air Quality and Noise. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 11: Air Quality [EN010141/DR/6.1]** the operational air quality effects of the Scheme (including traffic emissions) were scoped out of the assessment on the basis that they would be so small as to not require assessment. However, the assessment does address the construction and decommissioning phase effects including on-road vehicle exhaust emissions and emissions from non-road mobile machinery. The chapter concludes that through the implementation mitigation measures (included within the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.3**], there would be no significant effects in terms on-road vehicle exhaust emissions and emissions from non-road mobile machinery. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]** concludes that the Scheme has been designed to operate such that it complies with all appropriate and relevant noise standards and guidance, this includes noise generated from road vehicle movements.
Policy 91 Access to the Countryside	In considering proposals for development all of the following criteria will apply: i. Safeguarding of existing public rights of way and ensuring the existing routes are incorporated into the proposed development or an appropriate diversion is provided. ii. Where diversions to the existing public rights of way are proposed, it should be demonstrated that there are no other alternatives and that the benefits of the development outweigh the harm resulting from the proposed diversion. iii. Development should where possible, provide improvements to the public rights of way network including more river crossings linked to the current Borough of Bedford Rights of Way Improvement Plan. iv. All new routes should be multiuser routes and dedicated as bridleways with a minimum width of 4 metres. v. All new rights of way and gates must be designed to be in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act or relevant act as amended. vi. Incorporate new routes to extend the existing public rights of way network which are not fragmented by roads, railways and other infrastructure. vii. Ensure that all developments are designed to enable safe crossing of roads, railways and other infrastructure from new and existing public rights of way. viii. Public rights of way should retain their existing surface or an improved surface suitable for all users of the rights of way.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** public rights of way have been integrated into the masterplan for the Scheme, as shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**. This confirms that all PROW's will be retained in their entirety, with other permissive paths being created as part of the Scheme (new permissive paths in Site B to provide enhanced recreational access). There would be temporary diversions and closures of public rights of way during the construction phase. Public rights of way would be managed in accordance with the **outline Public Right of Way Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.8]**, which will be developed into a detailed Public Right of Way Management Plan post consent, and is secured by a requirement of the DCO.

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	ix. There should be no net loss of public rights of way as a result of any particular development. New permissive paths are encouraged as they can help to fill in gaps in the public rights of way network.	
Policy 92 Flood Risk	In considering new development water management and flood risk must be addressed by: i. Directing development to areas at lowest risk of flooding by applying the sequential test and, where necessary, the exception test, in line with national policy. Development will not be permitted in flood zone 3b unless defined as 'water compatible' in table 2 of the Planning Practice Guidance. Development will not be permitted in flood zone 3a unless defined as 'less vulnerable' or 'water compatible' in table 2 of the Planning Practice Guidance. ii. Considering all sources of flooding including fluvial, groundwater, surface water, reservoir overspill, infrastructure/sewer failure. Allowances for climate change must be included in the assessment of flood risk in accordance with latest national guidance. iii. Demonstrating that suitable infrastructure capacity is present or can be provided to serve the development. iv. Ensuring proposed development assesses and mitigates its impact on flood risk on and off site and includes measures to reduce overall flood risk. v. Where the assessment has identified that the proposed development is at flood risk (from any source) it must be demonstrated that the development will be safe for its lifetime through appropriate flood resilient and resistant design and include the provision of safe access and egress to an area of safe refuge. vi. Demonstrating how the cumulative impact of development on flooding to the immediate and surrounding area, and the Natura 2000 sites Portholme (SAC) and the Ouse Washes (SAC/SPA/Ramsar) downstream, has been addressed and reduced through the proposed development. Site specific flood risk assessments will need to be submitted in support of development where: vii. Development proposals in flood zone 1 exceed 1ha, in accordance with national policy; or viii. Development proposals are in flood zones 2, 3a or 3b; or ix. Evidence exists (e.g. in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or areas identified by the Lead Local Flood Authority) of areas with a high risk of flooding or known to be at risk of flooding from other sources, such as surface water. Where an increase in built footprint is proposed in undefended flood zone 3a or flood zone 3b, a site specific flood risk assessment should demonstrate that level-for- level and volume-for-volume floodplain compensation can be provided to ensure there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere.	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant effects on Hydrology and Flood Risk quality as a result of the Scheme. All potential sources of flooding have been reviewed as part of the assessment including fluvial (from rivers), tidal, surface water, sewer flooding, groundwater and artificial sources. Whilst the Site has watercourses running through it, the EA's fluvial flood map shows that flood zones are limited in extent, being largely restricted to the immediate proximity of watercourses. The EA's pluvial flood map also indicates that there are also localised areas of surface water flooding the Site, the most significant of which are associated with and close to watercourses. The Applicant has undertaken a Sequential Test assessment in connection with the Scheme the results of which are reported within Section 4.0 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The main application of the Sequential Test was undertaken during the site selection exercise which is set out within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2].** In assessing suitable sites, the Applicant considered a series of factors (including flood risk) that, to a greater or lesser extent, are important in determining whether alternative sites exist that represent '*reasonably available'* alternatives. The conclusion is that when taking into account wider sustainable objectives there are compelling reasons that there are no other sites reasonably available within the search area that are at a lower flood risk than the Site. Accordingly, **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2** concludes that the Sequential Test has been satisfied for the Scheme. Following the application of the sequential test in site selection the Applicant then applied the sequential approach when developing the Scheme layout and deciding upon the siting of infrastructure, this approach is also summarised in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. For fluvial flood risk, this has ensured that all critical infrastructure is located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 and that no electrical infrastructure would be placed within a 10m buffer of any watercourses, irrespective of whether there is a medium or high risk of flooding. Consequently, only a very small amount of the Scheme elements would be within areas of floor risk and only where it is essential, such as bridge crossings of watercourses. In terms of pluvial flooding Paragraph 027 of the PPG for Flood Risk and Coastal Change states that a proportionate approach should be taken to the application of the sequential test, and that where a FRA demonstrates that a development would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (without increasing flood risk elsewhere), then the sequential test does not need to be applied. It will be necessary for a small number of panels to be located in the pluvial flood extents shown on EA mapping Where PV panels are to be located in pluvial flood extents, they will be installed such that the underside of the panels will be above the maximum predicted flood levels , with only supporting legs of the mounting tables within the flood extent. The supporting legs have a small cross-sectional area and would have a negligible impact on pluvial flood risk. On this basis, and in accordance with the PPG, the sequential test need not be applied with regard to surface water flood risk. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.concludes that a sequential approach to the placement of infrastructure has been adopted throughout the development process in reference to the assessed flood risk data. Where it has been necessary for parts of the Scheme to be

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
		sited in fluvial or surface water flood risk zones, it has been clearly demonstrated why it is either not impacted by flood risk or how it has been mitigated. The Applicant has also presented evidence on the Exception Test within Section 4.0 **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. As all critical infrastructure has been sited in areas at the lowest risk of flooding (i.e., within Flood Zone 1) and the Scheme would remain operational and safe in times of flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere the Scheme is considered to have passed the requirements of the Exception Test. Finally, to ensure that the development doesn't increase offsite flood risk, the design will incorporate a SuDS scheme to manage surface water runoff, this is detailed in the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]**. The oSWMP will ensure a neutral or beneficial effect on on-site and third-party surface water flood risks.
Policy 93 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	All development proposals must incorporate suitable surface water drainage systems appropriate to the nature of the site. Post-development run off rates should aim to achieve greenfield equivalents. The fact that a site is previously developed and has an existing high run-off rate will not constitute justification. Development proposals will need to demonstrate: i. The discharge location has sufficient capacity to receive the post development flows. ii. The proposed surface water drainage system has been designed to prevent flooding of internal property and neighbouring for all rainfall events up to the 1% annual exceedance probability event including the appropriate allowance for climate change. iii. Sufficient treatment stages have been incorporated to adequately remove pollutants and protect the local water environment, following the principles of the latest national guidance. iv. Provisions for safe conveyance and storage of flood waters should the capacity of the proposed drainage system become exceeded. v. Adequate arrangements for the management and maintenance of the proposed drainage system for its lifetime have been provided. vi. Compliance with national guidance, and that regard has been given to Bedford Borough Council's SuDS Supplementary Planning Document, and industry best practice. vii. Opportunities to improve water quality, amenity and biodiversity benefits have been realised. Priority should be given to the following order of discharge locations: To ground via infiltration techniques; To an above ground water body; To a surface water sewer.	**ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.19]** set out the measures that would be adopted to manage surface water flood risk and drainage of the Scheme. The Scheme would be drained using sustainable drainage techniques that have been designed with regard to climate change allowances. The proposed drainage would ensure that surface water run-off from the Scheme does not exceed the existing run-off rates prior to the proposed project being constructed. The proposed drainage would be delivered within the Order limits and would not require the need of planning obligations. No ground modification is proposed, and the existing runoff / overland flow regime will not change. A Water Framework Directive Assessment is provided at **ES Vol 2 Chapter 8-2: Water Framework Directive Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The assessment in combination with **ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** conclude that the Scheme is WFD compliant. As such, the scheme would have no significant adverse impact on, or unacceptable risk to, the quantity or quality of water resources, or on meeting the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive.

8.0 BEDFORD ALLOCATIONS AND DESIGNATIONS LOCAL PLAN

8.1.1 Table 7 sets out policy requirements from the Bedford Allocations and Designations Local Plan.

Table 1: Bedford Allocations and Designations Local Plan

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Section 1 Introduction and Context		
Policy AD1 Sustainable Development Policy	When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan will be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether: i. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or ii. Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.	The **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** provides a summary of the need for the Proposed Development and demonstrates that the benefits of the Proposed Development clearly outweigh any adverse impacts. It also sets out the Proposed Development's compliance with the relevant provisions and policies of the Local Plan, and consequently meets the economic, social and environmental objectives of relevance to the development.
Section 7 Green Infrastructure		
Policy AD24 Green Infrastructure Opportunity Zones	The green infrastructure network is divided into six opportunity zones as shown on the Policies Map. The opportunity zones reflect those areas in the borough where there is the greatest potential to maintain and enhance the multi-functional nature of green infrastructure across the five themes of landscape, historic environment, biodiversity, accessible green space and access routes. Where appropriate, development will deliver or contribute to the protection, enhancement and/or creation of green infrastructure in accordance with the priorities set out for each opportunity zone.	The Order Limits do not include / encapsulate any part of the green infrastructure network opportunity zones. Notwithstanding, as set out in response to Bedford Local Plan Policy 35S above, the retention and enhancement of green infrastructure has been a significant consideration in the design development and the Scheme would result in minimal loss of existing green infrastructure whilst delivering significant gains / benefits across the Site.
Section 11 Infrastructure and Transport		
Policy AD36 Pedestrian Routes	The Council will require the protection, enhancement and promotion of pedestrian routes and facilities. The Council will seek the provision of new pedestrian routes and	As set out in the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]*** and shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1 Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**, the Scheme maintains the functionality

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
	facilities which are safe, convenient, attractive, and which link local facilities, particularly in association with major development and transportation proposals. The provision of routes which form part of the Green Wheel or other outdoor access routes, include safer routes to schools and include new river crossings at Honey Hill Road / Hillgrounds, adjacent to Britannia Ironworks, at Batts Ford and in the vicinity of Fenlake Meadows / Priory Park will be sought.	and connectivity of the existing green infrastructure network. The Scheme includes new areas of accessible natural green space throughout the Site, as well as new permissive paths (in Site B) to provide enhanced recreational access. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** public rights of way have been integrated into the masterplan for the Scheme, as shown on **ES Vol 3 Figure 2-1: Illustrative Environmental Masterplan [EN010141/DR/6.3]**. This confirms that all PROW's will be retained in their entirety, with other permissive paths being created as part of the Scheme (new permissive paths in Site B to provide enhanced recreational access). There would be temporary diversions and closures of public rights of way during the construction phase. Public rights of way would be managed in accordance with the **outline Public Right of Way Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.8]***, which will be developed into a detailed Public Right of Way Management Plan post consent, and is secured by a requirement of the DCO. The main impact of the Scheme on public rights of way would be visual effects. The Landscape and Visual Assessment **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** confirms that at Year 0 there would be significant visual effects on users of some rights of way located within and in close proximity to the Scheme. The number of significant visual effects on users of footpaths within the Study Area would notably reduce by Year 10, following the establishment of landscape mitigation, although some significant long-term visual effects would remain beyond this period. These effects would only be on a small number of rights of way which cross into the Site or are directly adjacent to it.

9.0 BEDFORD BOROUGH, CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON BOROUGH COUNCILS MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN: STRATEGIC SITES AND POLICIES

9.1.1 Table 9 sets out policy requirements from the Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Strategic Sites and Policies.

Table 1: Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Strategic Sites and Policies

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance Compliance
Section 6 Strategic Sites and Mineral Strategic Policies		
MSP 11	**Mineral Resource Assessment** Surface development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (excluding exemptions set out under policy MSP12: Surface Development within a Mineral Safeguarding Area) shall be accompanied by a Minerals Resource Assessment. This shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified professional, which establishes through site specific geological survey data, the existence or otherwise of a mineral resource of economic importance.	As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 13: Land and Soils [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, whilst there are various mineral reserves within the order limits there are a number of reasons why the Scheme remains acceptable.in the context of prevailing mineral safeguarding policy, they comprise: • It is apparent from a review of the adopted minerals and waste plans that there is currently no strategy to seek extraction of any of the mineral reserves / mineral safeguarding areas within the Order Limits. • The mineral reserves are large and are not wholly within the order limits, thus a proportion of the safeguarded mineral resource would remain availiable for the duration of the Scheme • The Scheme would comprise temporary development and each phase would be decommissioned after 40 years. Any impacts caused by the Scheme are considered reversible and temporary and as such, the minerals contained within the Order Limits would not be permanently sterilised and, post decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Scheme would not result in the sterilisation of any mineral reserves. The three local planning authorities have all reviewed the land and soils chapter at the PEIR stage and none have provided any comment on the sterilisation of minerals. As such, at this stage it is assumed they do not have any concerns on the matter.
MSP 12	**Surface Development within an MSA** Surface development will only be permitted within a Mineral Safeguarding Area where it has been demonstrated that: • The mineral concerned is proven to be of no economic value as a result of the undertaking of the Mineral Resource Assessment; or • The development will not inhibit extraction if required in the future; or • There is an overriding need for the development and prior extraction cannot reasonably be undertaken; or • The mineral can be extracted prior to the development taking place. Policies MSP11 and MSP12 will not apply to the following classes of surface development as they are unlikely to lead to the long term sterilisation of minerals: • Extensions of existing buildings within their curtilage; • Infilling development except for proposals within 250 metres of an existing permission for mineral extraction/waste disposal; • Minor development (such as walls, gates, accesses); • Individual residential caravans for a period of less than 5 years; • Amendments to previously approved developments; • Applications for Listed Building Consent; • Reserved matters;	

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance Compliance
	• Changes of Use (except where further built development is proposed). Where a development is applied for which is of a form not exempt under this policy and within an area of a designated Mineral Safeguarding Area, then policy MSP11 shall apply.	

10.0 GREAT STAUGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021 TO 2036

10.1.1 Table 10 sets out policy requirements from the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan 2021 to 2036.

Table 10: Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan 2021 to 2036

Paragraph Reference / Policy Number	Policy Text	Applicant's Statement of Compliance
Section 6 Village Character		
Policy GSNP7 Landscape and Townscape Characteristics	As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals must recognise, maintain and where possible enhance the existing landscape and settlement character in Great Staughton parish as set out in the Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape Assessment 2023 (available here). Development proposals shall, where appropriate: i. respect and retain the historic linear settlement pattern of Staughton Highway; ii. maintain the visual and physical separation which currently exists between Staughton Highway and The Town; iii. conserve or enhance the setting of the village gateways; iv. avoid significant adverse impacts on the locally distinctive and locally valued views, vistas and landmarks defined on Maps in Appendix 1 - Views and Vistas; v. maintain or reinforce the strong connection between settlement and the surrounding rural landscape through the sensitive treatment of the settlement edges and vi. respect, retain or enhance the character and distinctiveness Great Staughton's rural landscape. Development proposals in the character areas (as defined on Map 2), it will be expected to respond positively to existing landscape characteristics and settlement patterns, and incorporate measures that mitigate and manage landscape and visual impacts appropriately as set out in the Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape Assessment and as set out above in the Neighbourhood Plan.	The Applicant has prepared a LVIA at **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]**. The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with best practice guidance set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition*. The baseline characteristics of the existing landscape including the areas within Great Staughton parish, are identified in Section 5.6. The **DAD [EN010141/DR/5.6]** provides a description of the Scheme's design evolution, and how this has been informed by environmental assessment and consultation to deliver good design. Mitigation measures that have been embedded into the design of the Scheme to minimise and reduce effects are set out in Section 5.7 of **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and within the **Design Approach Document *[EN010141/DR/5.6]***. Some significant adverse landscape and visual has been identified in the local area around the development which, as described in NPS EN-3 is normal for this type of national infrastructure project. The weight that has been given to any landscape or visual harm has been addressed in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]** which sets out the overall planning balance for the Scheme. The assessment concludes that the benefits of the development including the overriding need and other benefits that would be derived from the Scheme would outweigh any disbenefits including any landscape and visual effects.
Section 7 Historic Environment		
Policy GSNP 9 Great Staughton Conservation Areas	Development proposals within, affecting the setting of, or views into or out of, the Conservation Areas, should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas in accordance with Local Plan policy LP 34 by ensuring the proposals: i. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the Conservation Areas alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance;	The Applicant has assessed the potential for effects on the characters setting of the Great Staughton Conservation Areas in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]).** The assessment includes a description of the significance of the Conservation Areas as well as a description of the potential effects on that significance, as is set out in Table 1 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 [EN010141/DR/6.2].**

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	ii. Use high quality, traditional materials and methods of construction; iii. Where appropriate, reduce the car dominated streetscape and create pedestrian friendly streets, iv. In Staughton Highway Conservation Area reflect the mix of dwelling types and retain the grassed and treelined boundaries; and v. In The Town Conservation Area retain the cottage style and open character reflecting its heritage. Development should preserve or enhance the setting of the Conservation and will be assessed against the content of the Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape Assessment. Proposals which involve the demolition of non-listed buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Areas should demonstrate: i. The building is structurally unsound and beyond technically feasible and economically viable repair (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect); or ii. All measures to sustain the existing use or find an alternative use/user have been exhausted. In all cases, proposals for demolition should include comprehensive and detailed plans for redevelopment of the site.	The setting assessment is supported by, and includes cross references to, representative visualisations produced for **ES Vol 1 Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual [EN010141/DR/6.1]** which includes key views that are highlighted within the Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape Assessment. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1])** concludes that the effect of the Scheme on the conservation area at all phases of the development would be minor and not significant in EIA terms. It does however comprise *less than substantial harm'* are considered to be at the low to mid end of the scale. The less that substantial harm arising from the Scheme is balanced against the scheme benefits in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, concluding that the benefits of the scheme outweigh any disbenefits.
Policy GSNP10 Non Designated Heritage Assets	A development proposal affecting a heritage asset, or its setting, is required to: i. Demonstrate that it is sympathetic to the asset(s) in terms of scale, materials and architectural distinctiveness and will not adversely affect the setting of the asset; ii. Be accompanied by archaeological investigations where relevant and in the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found, they shall be preserved in situ; iii. Be accompanied by a heritage statement setting out how harm has been avoided or minimised or the significance of those assets more effectively revealed for the community to appreciate. The assets listed below and shown on Maps 7 and 8 are designated as non-designated heritage assets: 1. Control Tower at Little Staughton Airfield and Little America Industrial Site. 2. Cookhouse, theatre, washroom and ancillary buildings at Little Staughton Airfield and Little America Industrial Site. 3. The Old School and Headmasters House. 4. The Snooty Tavern Pub. 5. The Manse, The Causeway. 6. 2-8 The Causeway. 7. Ridge and Furrow Fields.	The potential for impacts upon non-designated heritage assets has been assessed and the outcome / conclusions of the assessment are presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1].** The identified and potential non-designated heritage assets which may be subject to direct and indirect impacts are presented in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-2: Desk Based Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** The Applicant has recommended a mitigation strategy related to the potential for direct and indirect impacts on potential archaeological remains as is presented in the **outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [EN010141/DR/7.15]** and summarised in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]** The non-designated heritage assets which are considered subject to settings impacts are presented in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4: Setting Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2].** The only significant adverse residual effect that is are predicted upon the setting of non-designated heritage assets is to the moated site within Site D (Asset 407).The assessment confirms that the overall significance of this asset would remain intact and appreciable. The level of harm is assessed as 'less than substantial' and at the low to mid end of the scale. The policy test in NPS EN-1 specifies that this 'less than substantial' harm this 'should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. The assessment of harm vs benefits is provided in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**. As set out in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN010141/DR/6.1]**, further archaeological investigation will also be undertaken prior to construction, as secured by the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.3].***

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	Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets, identified in this Neighbourhood Plan, will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage assets as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan Policy LP 34.	
Section 8 Natural Environment		
Policy GSPN11 Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitats	Development Proposals on sites of ecological importance, including locally valued sites identified on map 9A, 9B, 9C and 9D, which is likely to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on their ecological importance (either individually or in combination with other developments), or the ecological connectivity between them shall demonstrate in an ecological assessment that a hierarchy of mitigation has been embedded into the design of the proposal with the following steps implemented in order: i. Firstly, avoid impacts: this means retaining habitats of value (including hedgerows, trees, ponds and any wildlife corridors and habitats) for enhancement and management and retaining species in situ; ii. Secondly, mitigate impacts where these have been found to be unavoidable and include measures to replace lost protected and priority habitats or their ecological connectivity and accommodating displaced species in the site boundary; iii. Thirdly, compensate if mitigation measures are insufficient. Include suitable measures to compensate for harmful effects. Specific sites which are of biodiversity importance to the village are detailed on Map 9A, 9B, 9C and 9D. Map 9A shows: A1. The hedgerows on the perimeter of the Playing Field A2. Birds Meadow to the South of the Causeway down to the River Kym A3. The open space North of Vicarage Walk A4. The ridge and furrow fields to the South of the Highway towards the Kym. A5. Agden Woods A6. The meadows between the school and the Old Vicarage A7. Closed Churchyard A8. Perry Woods Map 9B shows the whole river valley of the River Kym throughout the Parish. This is part of the Grafham-Brampton-River Kym Habitat Network. In addition, there are the Roadside verges both within the village and on its approaches are wide and full of diverse wildlife. Map 9C shows. C1. South of The Town on exiting the village towards Pertenhall just off the footpath. C2. South East off the Moor Road off the footpath which goes South to the Moor C3.and C4. The identified moats	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely impacts and effects of the Scheme on ecological receptors. Section 7.7 sets out the mitigation measures that are embedded into the Scheme to avoid or reduce the adverse effects. The chapter concludes that the Scheme will not result in any significant residual adverse effects upon ecological receptors.

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	There are also a number of ponds for irrigation in the Parish which provide important support for wildlife Map 9D shows many hedgerows which important to many forms of wildlife. D1. The copse on the B645 exit towards Kimbolton, this has a particularly special oak tree - marked in green. D2. The copse off of the B645 on entry to the village from St. Neots - marked in green D3. and D4. The horse chestnut tree near the New Vicarage and those in the churchyard - marked in brown D5. Trees at Old Vicarage driveway and near the cow sheds marked in red. • At the back of Vicarage Walk and its environs (Marked blue). • Along the footpaths off of Cage Lane between The Green and also along the 3 Shires bridleway towards Hail Weston (Marked blue) • Willows at the entrance to the Village from St Neots – (Marked Green) When a biodiversity net gain proposal is being formulated, the following are encouraged: i. The creation of new natural habitats appropriate for important wildlife species. ii. The planting of additional trees and hedgerows. iii. Restoring and enhancing existing biodiversity iv. Creating new wildlife corridors especially where these will help protect or enhance existing corridors in the parish. v. The restoration or creation of new natural habitats especially where these will help protect or enhance existing habitats. Demonstrating the value of the habitat (pre and post development) will be the responsibility of the applicant, and the information to be supplied will depend on the type and degree of proposals being submitted. For householder proposals which are otherwise exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements, an element of biodiversity gain is encouraged. Measures could include bird boxes, swift bric s, insect 'hotels', bee bloc s, bat boxes and/or hibernation holes, the creation of new ponds for amphibians and invertebrates, making changes to garden fencing to allow access for small mammals, or other nature-friendly landscaping feature within the householder's garden.	
Section 9 Climate Change		
Policy GSNP13 – Renewable Energy	Proposals for a Community Heat and Energy Storage Hub will be supported where it is demonstrated that all potential adverse impacts including cumulative impacts are or can be made acceptable in accordance with Policy LP 35 of the Local Plan.	See response to Policy LP35 of the Bedford Local Plan above.
Policy GSNP15 Surface Water Flood Risk	In addition to meeting the policy requirements set out in Huntingdonshire Local Plan's Policy LP 5 Flood Ris , having regard to the Secretary of State's policy set out in paragraphs 1 9 to 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the advice	**ES Vol 1 Chapter 8: Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010141/DR/6.1]** provides an assessment of the likely significant effects on Hydrology and Flood Risk quality as a result of the Scheme.

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	in Planning Practice Guidance, the Adopted Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document, proposals for major development will need to demonstrate, through a site-specific Surface Water Drainage Strategy, that the development will not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere. A Surface Water Drainage Strategy should: i. ensure each development is designed to manage the full range of flood risk, incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), within the development's own site; ii. not result in an unacceptable burden on an existing drainage systems; iii. ensure raised ground levels do not lead to flood water being discharged onto adjacent sites which are not raised on embankments; iv. iv. ensure flood alleviation measures designed as visually attractive green infrastructure, including landscaped areas and green roofs, contribute positively to the landscape character, biodiversity and Great Staughton's network of green spaces; v. where multi-functional SuDS are designed as an integral part of the green infrastructure and include open space provision, be managed and be able to function as an accessible and useable open space for the majority of the time; and vi. include a suitable maintenance plan which should be submitted and agreed by Huntingdonshire District Council including arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime. For other proposals other than major development, applicants will be expected to provide, through proportionate information, details of its surface water drainage proposals. All schemes shall justify the appropriateness of the proposals which shall include an allowance for climate change, in accordance with the most up to date Environment Agency advice. Opportunities to reduce overall flood risk in the parish are encouraged. Proposals for appropriate on-site storage and run off rates will be expected to meet the standards set in technical guidance set out in the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document, DEFRAs Non-Statutory Standards for Sustainable Drainage, the CIRIA SuDS Manual.	All potential sources of flooding have been reviewed as part of the assessment including fluvial (from rivers), tidal, surface water, sewer flooding, groundwater and artificial sources. Whilst the Site has watercourses running through it, the EA's fluvial flood map shows that flood zones are limited in extent, being largely restricted to the immediate proximity of watercourses. The EA's pluvial flood map also indicates that there are also localised areas of surface water flooding the Site, the most significant of which are associated with and close to watercourses. The Applicant has undertaken a Sequential Test assessment in connection with the Scheme the results of which are reported within Section 4.0 of **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. The main application of the Sequential Test was undertaken during the site selection exercise which is set out within **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2].** In assessing suitable sites, the Applicant considered a series of factors (including flood risk) that, to a greater or lesser extent, are important in determining whether alternative sites exist that represent '*reasonably available'* alternatives. The conclusion is that when taking into account wider sustainable objectives there are compelling reasons that there are no other sites reasonably available within the search area that are at a lower flood risk than the Site. Accordingly, **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2** concludes that the Sequential Test has been satisfied for the Scheme. Following the application of the sequential test in site selection the Applicant then applied the sequential approach when developing the Scheme layout and deciding upon the siting of infrastructure, this approach is also summarised in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. For fluvial flood risk, this has ensured that all critical infrastructure is located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 and that no electrical infrastructure would be placed within a 10m buffer of any watercourses, irrespective of whether there is a medium or high risk of flooding. Consequently, only a very small amount of the Scheme elements would be within areas of floor risk and only where it is essential, such as bridge crossings of watercourses. In terms of pluvial flooding Paragraph 027 of the PPG for Flood Risk and Coastal Change states that a proportionate approach should be taken to the application of the sequential test, and that where a FRA demonstrates that a development would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (without increasing flood risk elsewhere), then the sequential test does not need to be applied. It will be necessary for a small number of panels to be located in the pluvial flood extents shown on EA mapping Where PV panels are to be located in pluvial flood extents, they will be installed such that the underside of the panels will be above the maximum predicted flood levels , with only supporting legs of the mounting tables within the flood extent. The supporting legs have a small cross-sectional area and would have a negligible impact on pluvial flood risk. On this basis, and in accordance with the PPG, the sequential test need not be applied with regard to surface water flood risk. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.concludes that a sequential approach to the placement of infrastructure has been adopted throughout the development process in reference to the assessed flood risk data. Where it has been necessary for parts of the Scheme to be sited in fluvial or surface water flood risk zones, it has been clearly demonstrated why it is either not impacted by flood risk or how it has been mitigated. The Applicant has also presented evidence on the Exception Test within Section 4.0 **ES Vol 2 Appendix 8-1: Flood Risk Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. As all critical infrastructure has been sited in areas at the lowest risk of flooding (i.e., within Flood Zone 1) and the Scheme would remain operational and safe in times of flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere the Scheme is considered to have passed the requirements of the Exception Test.

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		Finally, to ensure that the development doesn't increase offsite flood risk, the design will incorporate a SuDS scheme to manage surface water runoff, this is detailed in the **outline Surface Water Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.13]**. The oSWMP will ensure a neutral or beneficial effect on on-site and third-party surface water flood risks.
Policy GSNP 17 Road Safety and Parking	Development proposals for non-residential development and new dwellings will be assessed for their impact on road safety and should ensure a satisfactory provision of off street parking. Where proposals are likely to unacceptably impact adversely on road safety including the safety hotspots identified in paragraph 10.13, they will be expected to mitigate their impact by providing or contributing towards road safety measures. Proposals which will have an unacceptably impact adversely on road safety, including B2 and B8 development without access directly to a B Class road, or cause an increase in on street parking after considering mitigation, will be refused. Proposals which lead to an overall improvement in road safety will be supported. All highways work in or in the vicinity of the Great Staughton Conservation Areas, required to mitigate the impact of a development, must be sensitively designed and seek to conserve or enhance the significance of individual heritage assets as well as the Conservation Areas.	**ES Vol 1 Appendix 9-1: Traffic and Transport [EN010141/DR/6.1]** confirms that the anticipated effect of the Scheme during the construction phase regarding Traffic and Transport would be negligible or minor in the context of Driver Delay, Accidents & Safety, Pedestrian Delay, Severance, Non-motorised Users, Amenity and Fear & Intimidation, and neutral in relation to public transport. The residual effects are therefore negligible, and not significant in EIA terms. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 9-1: Transport Assessment [EN010141/DR/6.2]** concludes that the Scheme will result in no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and that no severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be created by the Scheme. An **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan *[EN010141/DR/7.4]*** has been prepared that sets out measures to mitigate transport impacts during the construction phase. The Scheme would not require additional transport infrastructure.